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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the experience of one of seven working groups at a theater-for-development workshop in Zimbabwe, this report details the process followed by many groups, and reveals some of the major learnings, dilemmas, contradictions, strengths, and limiting factors found in a practical village-based theater-for-development process. A brief discussion of theater-for-development (TFD) presents this drama form as an experimental collaborative process designed to take theater out of urban enclaves and make it accessible to the masses, presenting such common concerns as crop production, water shortages, immunization, literacy, and family planning. A day-by-day diary account of this working group illustrates an overview of, and specific tasks involved with, the production of a "theater pungwe"--people's theater. A TFD model lists educational objectives for the drama process and defines the workshop objectives, which are: (1) to train development cadres and theater artists in theater-for-development, and (2) to start a TFD program in Murewa area of Zimbabwe as a training and popular education/culture program. The report's concluding sections provide an analysis of the workshop, including constraints, relationship with villagers, organizational strategy, and team work. An extensive bibliography is included. (JB)

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FROM PEOPLE'S THEATRE FOR REVOLUTION TO POPULAR THEATRE FOR RECONSTRUCTION:

DIARY OF A ZIMBABWEAN WORKSHOP

A detailed description and analysis of one of the working groups at the Pan-African Theatre-for-Development Workshop held in Zimbabwe from 15th August to 1st September 1983

Ross Kidd
International Popular Theatre Alliance
414 - 35 Charles Street West
Toronto M4Y 1R6, CANADA

Copies available from:
CESO
Badhuisweg 251
P.O. Box 90734
2509 LS The Hague
NETHERLANDS

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Lay-out by Remmelt Hummelen

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INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe has been struggling since Independence in 1980 to change the structures of 90 years of colonial and settler rule. Mobilization and conscientization of the masses is a key factor in this struggle and one of the means for this is people's theatre or community theatre — an activity which activated, politicized, and boosted the morale of peasants during the liberation war and now offers a powerful means of maintaining the close two-way communication with the peasants.

In August 1983 Zimbabwe organized a three-week workshop to orient their development cadres and consolidate their ideas in this field. The "Theatre for Development" (TFD) workshop was also organized as a pan-African event with popular theatre workers coming together from 19 African countries to exchange experiences and deepen their understanding of theatre-for-development.

This is one account of the workshop. It is the story of one of the seven groups which worked together during the workshop, going through a practical, village-based theatre-for-development process. The experience of this group is not representative of the experience of the whole workshop. Nevertheless, it shows the process followed by many of the groups and reveals some of the major learnings, dilemmas, contradictions, strengths and limiting factors. (This is not the official report on the workshop, but is merely one person's impressions of the events, focusing on the experience of one working group.)

I wish to thank Martin Byram, Stephen Chifunyise, Remmelt Hummelen, Ghonche Materego and Kalengay Mwambay for commenting on a draft of this paper. Any limitations, however, are my own responsibility.

The primary audience for this "diary" are the 16 team members and the 50 villagers who went through this process and the 85 other participants who went through a similar process in the six other groups. Its aim is to provide a record of the event and to reinforce what was learned.

It is also hoped that this account will help to demystify "theatre for development" and make it more accessible to others — by showing exactly what happens at every stage in the process. This is, of course, not meant to be prescriptive — there are many ways of doing "theatre for development." Borrow or steal whatever seems useful; but you will probably need to work out your own TFD methods and strategies suited to your own objectives, operational contexts, and resources. One of the major things this experience has taught us is that Theatre for Development is not transferable from one country to another in the same way as a teaching technique. It cannot simply be plugged into a new context. It is a highly complex process and needs to be carefully tailored for each new situation in which it is used.

The Zimbabwe workshop was the first occasion to bring popular theatre workers together on a pan-African basis. Theatre workers who had heard of each other's work but never met came together for the first time, shared and debated their ideas, and talked about ways of maintaining the exchange. The main objective, however, was to transfer the TFD methodology to countries and theatre workers who had no previous experience of theatre-for-development — in this case, 31 theatre workers from 16 African countries. It was a chance for them to try out this kind of work and assess its potential for their own countries. Many of the newcomers were theatre workers from francophone Africa.

The workshop also learned from and responded to the needs of Zimbabwe, who hosted the event and sponsored half the participants. Zimbabwe contributed its own rich history of people's theatre during the liberation struggle, which provided the base and the spirit for the village work. The Zimbabweans organized the workshop to reassess this experience of people's theatre for liberation, to learn from the experience of other African countries, and then to evolve their own ideas on theatre as a tool for socialist reconstruction. The workshop was a testing ground and a training experience for their development cadres. It also served as a way of mobilizing a theatre-for-development program in one rural district of Zimbabwe.

The workshop was initiated by UNESCO, the International Theatre Institute, and the Zimbabwe Government. The International Popular Theatre Alliance (IPTA) worked with the Zimbabwe Government in planning and running the event. Other sponsors included the African Cultural Institute (Dakar), the Canadian International Development Agency, Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO), the

Commonwealth Foundation, the International Council for Adult Education, the French Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, the German Foundation for International Development, NOVIB (Netherlands), and the Swedish International Development Authority. Participants included 31 theatre workers from outside Zimbabwe, 57 Zimbabwean development cadres and theatre artists, and 20 resource persons (drawn from Zimbabwe and eight other African countries).

I.

BACKGROUND

1. Methodology

As the name suggests, the workshop involved practical activity and "hands-on" experience rather than formal presentations and theoretical study. There were a few plenary discussions — two evening meetings, for example, were organized to discuss the African network of the International Popular Theatre Alliance — but most of the time was spent in working groups, learning the skills of Theatre for Development through doing it — applying the TFD process in a real situation. Those with experience worked as resource persons, bringing their experience to bear on the practical situation rather than simply talking about it. (A three-day conference held after the workshop gave participants a chance to exchange experiences, as well as to discuss ways of improving theatre communications and cooperation.)

This type of workshop played down the differences in experience: what became important was people's contribution to the process at hand rather than their pre-workshop knowledge or status/position. Some who came as novices found they had a natural aptitude for this work and took a lead in the animation work.

Debates on methodology were not abstract or theoretical: they were rooted in and focused by the practical realities in the field. Many new ideas emerged out of the work, especially from the new context — a situation where the peasants already had their own experience of theatre as a means of community dialogue and contributed their own ideas to the work.

The methodology for the workshop drew on two influences:

- the experience in theatre-for-development accumulated over the last three decades in Independent Africa, and
- Zimbabwe's own experience of people's theatre for conscientization and mobilization during the liberation war.

2. Theatre for Development in Independent Africa

In the '50s a number of "theatre-for-development" experiments were carried out by the colonial governments in the transitional period as pressure built up for Independence. In Ghana and Uganda, for example, mobile teams were formed to tour the rural areas with plays on cash crop production, immunization, the importance of self-help, literacy, sanitation, and local government tax. The actors were development workers and often combined their performances with practical demonstrations (for example, of agricultural techniques), question-and-answer sessions, and other forms of practical activity (e.g., the distribution of insecticide sprayers, vaccination drives, literacy teacher recruitment, etc.). The tours were a form of "mass education" to complement and reinforce a process of community development and extension work at the village level (Carr, 1951; Mulira, 1975; Pickering, 1957).

In the '60s, another form of "theatre for development" emerged — the travelling theatre projects of the universities of Ibadan (Nigeria), Makerere (Uganda), Nairobi (Kenya), Malawi and Zambia. Groups of university students took plays on the conflicts between tradition and modernization and other issues to rural villages and urban squatter areas as a form of "cultural democratization," taking theatre out of the urban enclaves (in which it had operated during the colonial era) and making it accessible to the masses. In the case of Zambia the travelling theatre groups also organized drama workshops during their tours so that theatre skills could be transmitted to local people and local groups formed (Chifunyise and Kerr, 1984; Cook, 1966; Kerr, 1984).

In the '70s a third form of "theatre for development" emerged, based on experimental work in Botswana. Instead of touring ready-made plays on themes determined outside the villages, development cadres and theatre workers (a) researched the villagers' issues and concerns before making the drama, and (b) organized discussion at the end of the performance in order to facilitate a process of community education and mobilization (Byram and Kidd, 1978). This experiment inspired similar work in Ghana (Atta, 1978), Lesotho (Horn, 1983), Malawi (Kamlongera, 1982), Nigeria (Etherton and Crow, 1979), Sierra Leone (Edwards, 1981), Swaziland (Byram, 1981), Tanzania (Mlama, 1984), and Zambia (Chifunyise, 1980), with further modifications as experience grew.

A form of training was developed to orient people to this type of popular theatre work. Trainees working in groups visited villages near the training centre and interviewed villagers about their problems. Afterwards each team returned to the training centre, analyzed the information they had gathered, and worked out a drama based on the problems identified. Then each team performed the drama back in the village and organized a community discussion (MacKenzie, 1978).

This process worked well as a means of putting across information and development messages but it had a number of limitations as a process of popular education or conscientization —

- It left the villagers out of the key stages of the process — analysis of the initial data and dramatization.
- It forced the villagers into the relatively passive role of being (a) objects of an externally-controlled research process, and (b) an audience for messages, and analyses, produced by outsiders (rather than doing their own critical thinking).
- The outside performers standing up and saying what should be done to change things in the community took the initiative away from the villagers standing up to speak for themselves.
- The plays tended to be didactic, prescribing new skills, attitudes and practices to be adopted by the villagers rather than raising for discussion the socio-political constraints on villagers.
- The pressure to finalize a play for performance and the lack of villager input tended to limit the critical content in the play. Another contributing factor was the development workers' own stereotyped thinking, which often reduced complex social problems to a matter of villagers' ignorance, apathy, or bad habits.
- The limited interaction with the villagers (in the community research and the final performance) and the villagers' relatively passive involvement could not produce the organizational momentum for follow-up action. Bringing people together on a single occasion to see and discuss socio-drama could not in itself create the organizational capacity for community mobilization.

A new approach was needed if the work was to become participatory, critical, and a catalyst for collective action. A group at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria showed the way forward. They restructured the approach so that villagers were involved throughout the process. The former "objects" of research and one-way communication were integrated into a process of research and learning as the "subjects" of the exercise. Instead of retreating to the workshop centre after collecting the data, the outside team remained in the village and developed the analysis and the dramatization with the villagers. Instead of putting on plays for the peasants, they assisted the peasants to make the "plays" themselves (Abah and Balewa, 1982; Abah and Etherton, 1983; Bappa, 1981; Crow and Etherton, 1982).

The process of making the play, through a combination of dramatization and analysis, became the core of the learning experience. Villagers were encouraged to act out their problems and their improvisation brought out in a natural way some of the underlying contradictions, motivations, rationalizations, or obstacles which helped to explain the problem or the reason why it remained unsolved. Then subsequent discussion drew out new perspectives which were then discussed. The "play" kept changing as the understanding of the participants deepened. Each time it reflected their new analysis or a new attempt to transform reality.

This process of collaborative work with the villagers on "transformational drama" — of changing and rechanging the drama and using it to concretize and focus the analysis, to test out alternative strategies and bring out fresh contradictions and constraints — proved to be a more vital process of conscientization than villagers watching and discussing a ready-made play produced by outsiders.

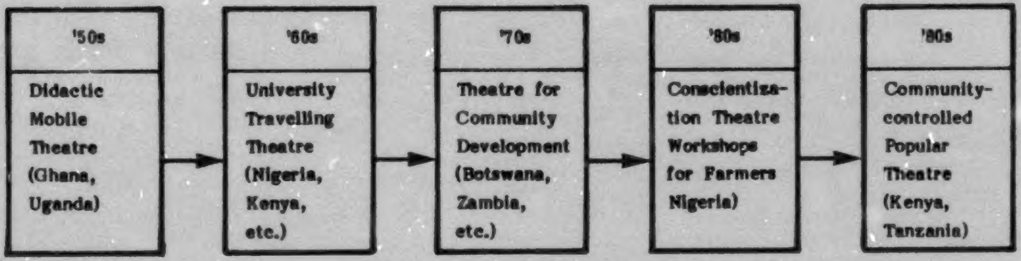
Putting the means of artistic production and analysis within the hands of peasant groups meant that the peasants were taking control of their own transformation process, rather than remaining passive recipients of ideas and analysis from the outside. They were voicing their own concerns and doing their own thinking, and this had a major effect on their self-confidence. At the same time, the fact that they were doing the cultural work themselves meant that it could be linked more organically with an organizing process.

The process created a much more critical perspective, revealing the political-economic roots of the villagers' poverty, landlessness, and unemployment. It clarified some of the possibilities for action and brought out potential constraints on each course of action. It also conscientized the development workers, getting them to work with rather than for the villagers, challenging their developmentalist assumptions and technocratic conditioning, and exposing them to structural perspectives and some of the real constraints faced by peasants.

Operationally it meant a much more complex role for the outside team. They became animateurs rather than performers. Their job was to animate or facilitate a drama-making and analysis process: getting the villagers to do the thinking (to question their assumptions, to look for root causes, to strategize) and getting the villagers to make plays and songs as a way of focusing, concretizing, and generating the analysis.

Some other significant advances in Theatre-for-Development methodology have taken place in East Africa. In Kenya, peasants and workers of a rural village and squatter area — Kamiriithu — with the help of a few locally-based community educators, have developed their own organization to initiate educational, cultural, and economic activities on a community basis. The organization is run and controlled by the peasants and workers and its activities are carried out on a collective, self-reliant basis. The most significant activity, in addition to consciousness-raising literacy work, has been community theatre. The whole community — literally — helped in producing two major dramas which have become landmarks in Kenyan theatre history. Using their own labour and resources they also constructed a 2000-seat open-air theatre. Over 300 people pitched up every weekend over several months to help shape the dramas and participate in the performance, and in the process they discussed and analyzed their history of anti-colonial struggle and their current situation of landlessness, unemployment, poverty, and exploitation. These organising and consciousness-raising initiatives, however, were seen as too threatening by the Kenyan government, which banned the performance of both dramas, withdrew the license of the centre, and smashed to the ground the peasant-built theatre.

More recently, in Tanzania, a group of university-based theatre workers have carried out an innovative theatre-for-development project in a rural village. Eschewing the short-term, one-off approach of some of the earlier experiments, they have worked with the villagers on an on-going basis over an 18-month period, visiting the village for short workshops every three months. By consciously limiting their input and intervention, they have encouraged the villagers — in this case a village-based cultural group — to take the initiative in developing their own theatre-for-development program. One of the major outcomes of this TFD project has been the empowering of village youth who up until the time of this project had little say in decision-making at the village level (Mlama, 1984).


'50s
Didactic Mobile Theatre (Ghana, Uganda)
'60s
University Travelling Theatre (Nigeria, Kenya, etc.)
'70s
Theatre for Community Development (Botswana, Zambia, etc.)
'80s
Conscientization Theatre Workshops for Farmers Nigeria)
'80s
Community-controlled Popular Theatre (Kenya, Tanzania)

3. People's Theatre During Zimbabwe's Liberation War: The Pungwe

The workshop also drew on Zimbabwe's experience of people's theatre during the liberation struggle. Theatre had played a major role in the ideological training of the freedom fighters in Mozambique and Tanzania where it served the purpose of clarifying the aims and issues of the struggle and re-enacting the history of the liberation war. It also helped to build up morale in the freedom camps, as reflected in this account of an experience in Mozambique by Comrade Dzingai Mutumbuka:

> *After one Rhodesian attack we didn't have any huts or any cover. Our clothes had been destroyed, our books, everything. I remember one night it was raining non-stop and these kids were lying under the trees, drenched, but they were singing, and they kept on singing. They laughed the whole night, and they said we shall conquer. That kind of spirit could only have been produced by the struggle. (Quoted in Martin and Johnson, 1981, p. 278)*

Theatre also played an important role in the liberated or semi-liberated areas inside Zimbabwe. This experience was described by Comrade Dzingai Mutumbuka, Minister of Education and Culture, during the opening of the workshop:

> *Our fighters and villagers organized all-night pungwes in which the combatants and their supporters put on skits, songs, poetry, and dances as a way of strengthening morale and talking about the issues and problems of the war. The pungwes played an important role in revitalizing the traditional performing arts which had been undermined during the colonial era. Even in the most repressive situation our songs, often operating under the guise of religious tunes, served to consolidate the support of villagers for the struggle.*

The pungwes were organized two or three nights a week in the liberated or semi-liberated areas as a covert means of political education, mobilization, morale-building, and guerilla-villager communication.

> *Behind the ostensibly quiescent normal peasant daily existence of the Tribal Trust Lands, there grew up activities and structures of a system of dual power challenging the settler state. This was metaphorically - and frequently also literally - a difference of night and day. When darkness fell and the curfew laws came into operation, entitling anyone leaving their homes to be shot by the security forces, villagers would sneak off to the agreed rendezvous for a meeting with local guerilla units. (Cliffe, Mpofu, Munslow, 1980, p. 51)*

The cultural format of these pungwes arose out of the needs of the liberation struggle. The freedom fighters recognized in the early '70s that guns were not enough — they also needed to win the commitment and active support of the peasants in order to be successful. This required meetings and political education sessions with the peasants, and early on they found that the peasants' own cultural gatherings were an ideal pretext or cover for these meetings and a powerful means of conveying the ideas and spirit of the revolution.

Villagers got turned off by one-way, over-didactic approaches. But when the speeches were shortened and combined with songs and dances or the same messages were conveyed through short sketches, the villagers responded with enthusiasm. When the villagers themselves became major actors and co-organizers of the event and not mere listeners, their interest and support grew even more.

Participation and dialogue, therefore, became the essence of the pungwe. This wasn't one-way communication — guerillas simply standing up and giving speeches. This was theatre as it has always meant to be — a highly participatory activity involving everyone in the creation of culture. People joined in the singing, contributed their own sketches, music, and dances, responded to the politicization talks with slogans and bursts of song, and participated in the discussions which punctuated the various cultural presentations. Villagers and the fighters acted out and danced their commitments and built up their strength and unity through collective music-making.

The medium was part of the message. Through the pungwe people's own culture was being revived, recognized, and advanced as something of value in itself and also as an important tool for the liberation effort. This increased people's confidence in themselves and in their own traditions, and reinforced one of the nationalists' demands — a society which values and builds on the skills and strengths of the people, rather than suppressing or undermining them or exploiting them for commercial gain.

While the form of the theatre was "traditional" (in the sense of representing the people's own creativity), the content was a vehicle for both "traditional" or historical themes (through folk plays and rituals), and for "non-traditional" or contemporary themes.

The pungwe also represented peasant capacity for organization. The peasants not only performed in the pungwe; they also organized it, along with the freedom-fighters. It was their initiative, not something externally induced. Cultural organization was one aspect of mass-based peasant organization which emerged during the war as a result of peasant politicization and mobilization. Villagers recruited combatants and provided food, information, and cover to the fighters. As more and more areas became liberated or semi-liberated, these village organizations took on a wider range of activity, including education, health, food production, security, etc. The pungwe was central to this organizational effort: it brought the villagers together, articulated the villagers' grievances, explained the strategies of the struggle and people's role in it, created the forum for community discussion and decision-making, and generated the spirit for community action. At the same time, it was a form of conscientization, challenging the myths and racist conditioning of the colonial regime, reinforcing people's confidence, and giving them a critical view of their society. In summary, it was a form of (a) cultural expression and self-reliant entertainment, (b) political education, (c) community-building, (d) conscientization, and (e) morale-building.

In the post-Independence period the pungwe has continued to be a vital part of village life — a form of community celebration, entertainment, and social education. Now that the nationalists have taken over state power, there is a need

- to maintain the close communication with the people, explaining and consulting people on the new policies and programs and mobilizing their participation in the national reconstruction effort;
- to conscientize the people, challenging the values and attitudes propagated by the colonial regime, building their confidence, and fostering a consciousness suited to socialist transformation; and
- to reinforce the cooperative organization and communal self-reliance which developed during the war.

These new objectives require new communication and educational methods reflecting the new way that government wants to work with the people. The coercion and propaganda used by the Smith regime is being replaced with the dialogue and participation of the Mugabe government. One of the aims of the workshop was to explore ways of using or revitalizing the pungwe for these purposes.

The pungwe is an ideal form for blending development communication, conscientization, and community decision-making. To begin with it is organized and controlled by the people themselves and therefore lends itself to popular control over the educational process. As a highly participatory activity involving everyone in the community, it creates a natural forum for community issue-raising and discussion. It has room for inputs from the outside (freedom-fighters were bringing in political ideas which had been framed outside the community) but it also leaves room for the peasants to express their own ideas and concerns — through songs, skits, and discussion. This creates the potential for a dialogue on (a) government's priority programs and policies, and (b) the problems as perceived by the people — a much better communication/learning situation than the conventional extension practice of coming into a community with a fixed message and a didactic approach.

The workshop adopted the Nigerians' "theatre-with-the-people" approach and combined it with the Zimbabwean liberation theatre experience of the pungwe. Within this overall framework groups were given lots of flexibility to experiment and try out different ways of animating and developing the process.

4. The First Few Days

In the opening speech Comrade Dzingai Mutumbuka, the Minister of Education and Culture, talked about the importance of translating the liberation theatre experience into new strategies for conscientization, mobilization, and community-building. He said that this required not only the development of theatre skills but also an ideological orientation suited to the task of "transforming the inherited capitalist culture to a socialist one." At the end of the speech he emphasized the importance of democratizing cultural institutions in Zimbabwe:

> *Instead of continuing to support expensive institutions that cater to a small minority, as was the case under the colonial regime, we want to make it possible for everyone in Zimbabwe to participate in the creation and consumption of culture.*

In the first two days, participants got to know each other, the workshop objectives, and the Zimbabwean context, while waiting for other participants to arrive. (Some who were travelling from West Africa took three or four days to make all their connections!) The initial briefing was unfortunately too didactic. The most lively session came on the afternoon of the second day, when participants were given a practical demonstration of the dramatization-analysis process. Working with a contradiction raised by a participant (the conflict experienced by rural development workers who on one hand encourage peasants to build self-help rural schools while on the other send their own children to better-equipped urban schools), the resource persons got a short scene going with a few participants as actors. Then they demonstrated how the scene could be reworked or extended through discussing it and developing a new scene based on the suggestions.

The introductory phase, however, was not all talk and seriousness. It also included singing, dancing, and theatre games which lightened the mood and brought people together in a spirit of celebration.

The next section gives a day-by-day account of one of the working groups in the final twelve days of the workshop. An overview of the group's work is given on the following page.

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

MON-TUES 15-16 (Days 1-2)
Introduction to Workshop, Objectives, Process, and Context (in full plenary)

(break into groups)

WEDNESDAY 17 (Day 3)
- Self-introductions and participants' expectations
- Discussion of objectives and process
- Planning first day's visit to village

THURSDAY 18 (Day 4)
- Walking tour of community
- Introductory meeting with community
- Informal interviews and group discussions

FRIDAY 19 (Day 5)
- Listing the issues on newsprint
- Role-playing by the villagers on the issues as part of an informal pungwe

SATURDAY 20 (Day 6)
- Team analysis of the issues (morning)
- Participation in a district pungwe (afternoon)

MONDAY 22 (Day 7)
- Further information-gathering and analysis of the problems with the villagers (separate meetings for men and women)

TUESDAY 23 (Day 8)
- Drama-making and analysis/discussion on each of the issues
- Changes to sketches based on villagers' inputs

WEDNESDAY 24 (Day 9)
- New venue (Bunhu)
- Participation in a community-organized pungwe
- Protracted discussion on water problem

THURSDAY 25 (Day 10)
- Further drama-making and analysis of ways of solving water problem

FRIDAY 26 (Day 11)
- Separate rehearsals (men and women) in the morning: improving the content and structure/performance of the plays
- Exchange of performances in the afternoon

MONDAY 29 (Day 12)
- Final performance in Muchinjike (rehearsal in the morning)
- Community discussion on water issue

TUESDAY 30 (Day 13)
- Participation in a 5-hour "theatre pungwe" in neighbouring village (along with another workshop team)

WEDNESDAY 31 (Day 14)
- Morning: follow-up and evaluation with villagers
- Afternoon: team evaluation and report-writing

THURSDAY 1 (Day 15)
Team Reports to full plenary and Workshop Evaluation

II

THE DIARY: A DAY-BY-DAY ACCOUNT OF ONE OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Day 3 (Wednesday)

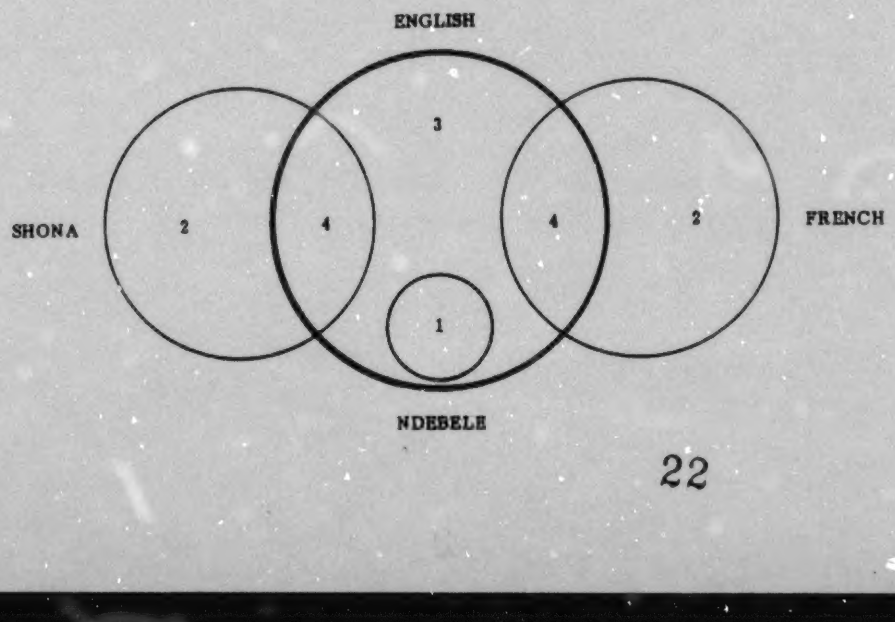
The real work started on the third day, when participants broke into groups. From this point on each group worked largely on its own, making its own plans and developing its own working process. However, brief plenary sessions were held every second morning to keep the unity of the whole workshop, to give some common briefings, and to share some of the groups' learnings.

The rest of this account is essentially about one group, the one in which I participated as a resource person. It included 16 members — seven Zimbabweans and nine outsiders. Given below is a list of the team members and the special tasks they took on during the workshop.

The Zimbabweans were: Lovemore Bwanya, a student theatre activist (the main translator and group spokesperson in the village meetings); Nimrod Chinhengo, a non-formal educator (the group's song leader and source of advice on rural extension and non-formal education in Zimbabwe); Fungayi Hunda, a peasant farmer and part-time cultural worker from the area (the local contact person — liaising with village leaders, mobilizing village participants, arranging the meeting place, introducing meetings, providing local information, etc.); Elineth Mhlophe, a literacy organizer (a major animateur with the women); Mbuya Matshuma, a full-time cultural organizer employed by ZANU/PF; Emmanuel Mufambanhando, a health educator (who made an important contribution to the conscientization process — but, unfortunately, missed several key sessions); and Genius Runyowa, a government cultural officer (who dropped out at an early stage of the workshop).

The international participants and resource persons were: Janet Adjei (Ghana), a lecturer in drama at a teacher training college in Zimbabwe (resource person); Abdoulaye Maiga (Mali), a member of Mali's national theatre troupe (the team comedian and morale-builder); Ghonche Materego (Tanzania), a lecturer in Tanzania's training college for cultural workers (a key animateur in the village meetings); Kalengay Mwambay, director of the University of Zaire's theatre department (who arrived late yet caught the animation concept instantly and took an important leadership role); Tommy Sharkah (Sierra Leone), a teacher and part-time popular theatre worker (a morale-builder and the team magician); Aboubacar Toure (Ivory Coast), a university theatre professor (the group's rapporteur in French); Vel Veeramootoo (Mauritius), a teacher and part-time popular theatre worker (the overworked English-French interpreter); Martha Vestin (Sweden), a popular theatre director and organizer of the Tanzania-Sweden Theatre Exchange (resource person); and Ross Kidd (Canada), an adult educator and organizer of several theatre-for-development workshops (resource person and English rapporteur).

We spent the first day getting to know each other and planning our work in the village. Our first problem was communication — twelve of us spoke English, six French, six Shona, and one Ndebele. We decided on English as the working language and started by translating everything openly, sentence by sentence. This bogged us down so we resorted to a continuous "whispering translation" with Veeramootoo sandwiched between the two unilingual francophones and a similar arrangement for the two unilingual Shona speakers. This worked more smoothly but put the four non-English speakers at a disadvantage. This balanced out, however, when we shifted to the village where Shona became the dominant language, and English and French the whispered languages. The francophones nonetheless remained two steps behind, the translation going from Shona to English to French, so they always got the jokes after everyone had stopped laughing!



In the initial self-introductions we discovered the wide range of interests and experience within the team. Those from outside Zimbabwe worked largely as performers or theatre directors, producing plays for urban and occasionally rural audiences. Few had experience working directly with peasants to produce theatre in an educational process. The Zimbabwean development workers used simple skits in their educational work with peasants — Elineth, for example, put on short plays during recruitment meetings for the national literacy programme. However, the plays tended to be message-oriented and exhortatory, rather than the focus for a process of community analysis and decision-making. The Zimbabwean cultural workers organized cultural festivals for peasants but had no experience in animating peasant cultural activity as a medium for development.

All team members, therefore, expressed a strong interest in learning the theatre-for-development process. The resource persons summarized this process as:

- building a relationship with members of the community and motivating them to participate
- working with them to study their situation and identify issues for in-depth analysis
- learning the indigenous forms of cultural expression of the area (e.g. pungwe), and utilizing them for the theatre-for-development activity
- exploring through drama, dance, mime, and song (coupled with discussion) ways of deepening the understanding of the issues and looking for solutions
- organizing a performance as a way of bringing the whole community together and agreeing on solutions and action
- discussing with the villagers ways in which this short-term activity could be continued by the villagers on their own (follow-up)
- evaluating the whole experience and drawing out the lessons learned.

We then focused on our first day in the village. We decided we should give as much attention to getting to know the villagers as to finding out about the village. We felt we didn't need to "pump" the villagers for detailed information since we would be returning each day and could learn the details on a more gradual basis, with much of it emerging as needed for the analysis process. (This contrasts with the Botswana approach, in which information-gathering is the sole preoccupation at the initial stage, since this is the only opportunity to collect this data. Once this stage is over, the workshop team leaves the village and works on its own to do the analysis and develop the drama, without the villagers as a continuing source of information.)

So our first objective, we felt, should be to establish a good working relationship — and we brainstormed a number of ways for achieving this:

- briefing and consulting the village leaders
- adopting local forms of greeting and respecting other local traditions
- introducing ourselves and giving some of our own background, so that the process was two-way rather than a one-way interrogation
- explaining the purpose and nature of the TFD activity so that people would (a) understand why the outside team had come to the village, and (b) be motivated to participate in the TFD activity
- talking with people on a basis of equality and showing a genuine interest in what they had to say
- "chatting" with people informally rather than conducting formal interviews
- encouraging an exchange of songs, dances, and games (at the introductory community meetings) as a means of (a) building rapport and encouraging participation, (b) introducing the culture-based approach to TFD work, (c) finding out about the villagers' own experience of cultural activity
- being aware of our effect as outsiders on the village (e.g., lunch-time meals should be shared with villagers attending the workshop sessions)
- recognizing that the process was a two-way learning process in which we would be learning at the same time the villagers were.

Having agreed on ways of building a relationship with the villagers, we then turned to the task of information-gathering or community research. We talked about this task as the first step in a process of community analysis, which would be (a) collaborative, and (b) critical, aimed at both the conscientization of the villagers and self-conscientization. The process would be

- collaborative in the sense that we would be working with the community to analyse itself, rather than as alien and alienated researchers working in isolation from the village being studied;
- critical in the sense that we would be attempting to go beyond conventional, everyday thinking, trying to identify the root causes of problems.

The ultimate aim was conscientization which we defined as "a learning and organizing process in which people develop the critical understanding, self-confidence and organizational strength to realize their potential for development and transformation." This process starts with the community's own experience and assessment of their experience, develops analysis in relation to the goal of transforming their situation, and ideally culminates in organized action by the community. The process would not only conscientize the villagers; it would also conscientize ourselves, challenging some of our own stereotyped thinking and deepening our own understanding. Our collaborative analysis with the villagers would trigger new awareness of the contradictions facing them. Learning that the ward in which we would be working was called Mhuneyembwa, meaning "Skin of a Dog," we described conscientization as the collective process of getting beneath Mhuneyembwa's skin — its surface appearance — in order to discover its essential reality, the social and political-economic structures which shaped the possibilities and constraints on villagers.

Information-gathering, therefore, was introduced as part of a process of critical and collective analysis. To concretize this we asked the Zimbabweans to brainstorm a list of constraints on agricultural production. They responded with "peasants' superstitions," "conservative attitudes," "laziness," "drought," "lack of equipment," "lack of capital," "no oxen to plough," "land shortage," etc. We challenged them to identify which features were root causes and which were symptoms of, or other people's rationalizations for, the more fundamental problems. This discussion brought out some of our own victim-blaming biases and our own superficial thinking and underlined the notion that we would be challenging ourselves to think more critically at the same time as conscientizing the villagers.

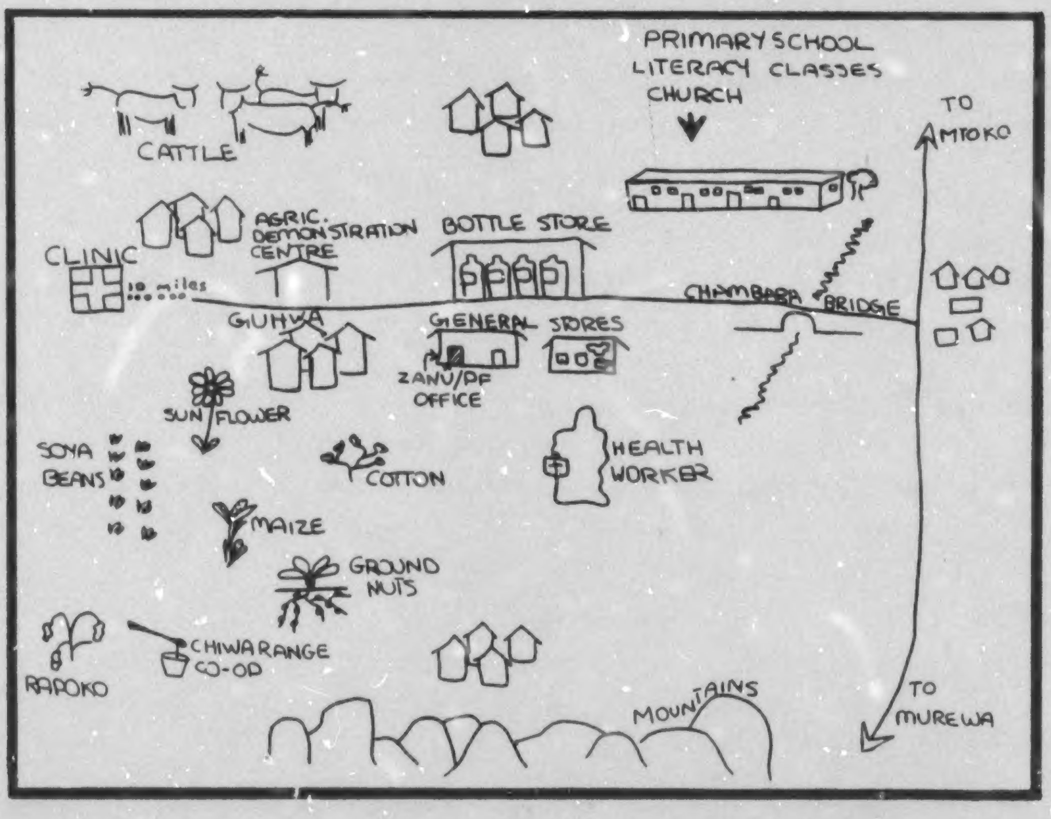
Having become clearer about the purposes for information-gathering, we then discussed the methodology. We talked about ways of eliciting information in less formal ways than interviewing. As we saw it, the task was not simply to collect information, but also to stimulate a discussion in which the villagers themselves identified their most important problems and examined root causes. Information-gathering was to be both (a) a means of orienting the outside team to the realities of the village and (b) a means of encouraging the villagers to identify and express their important concerns — the first step in their learning. Someone suggested that a conversation or chat, which is an interview in disguise, would bring things out in an indirect and more subtle way than a frontal barrage of probing questions. Another challenged this idea of the "interview in disguise," saying that while we should be informal we should be forthright and open about why we were in the village, what we were trying to find out, and how the information would be used. He suggested that if we made the objectives of the chat clear, villagers would be motivated to make much more input than they would in simply responding to questions.

We went on to discuss:

- the kinds of information we were looking for and the types of questions which might bring this out
- the issue of recording: some felt that note-taking during the "interview" would detract from the informality, others insisted that note-taking was important and legitimate as long as the purpose of the "interview" and the use of notes were cleared with the "interviewees"
- the different sectors of the village to be interviewed: men and women, youth and elders, rich and poor, village leaders and ordinary villagers, etc.

We then role-played an interview or "chatting session," which sparked discussion on ways of introducing ourselves, explaining our objectives, putting the "interviewee" at ease, asking questions, recording the information, etc.

In the afternoon we learned from Hunda (the village contact person) that Mhuneyembwa was a huge area, consisting of over 30 villages. So he suggested we work in Muchinjike, the village he lived in. We asked him to brief us on Muchinjike and we recorded the data on a sketch map showing the major institutions and activities. This gave us an overview of the village and prepared us for our own first day of touring the community on foot and meeting with villagers.


PRIMARY SCHOOL
LITERACY CLASSES
CHURCH
CATTLE
TO MTOKO
AGRIC. DEMONSTRATION CENTRE
BOTTLE STORE
CLINIC
10 miles
CHAMBARA BRIDGE
GUHWA
GENERAL STORES
ZANU/PF OFFICE
SUN FLOWER
SOYA BEANS
COTTON
HEALTH WORKER
MAIZE
GROUND NUTS
RAPOKO
CHIWARANGE CO-OP
MOUNTAINS
TO MUREWA

We also made a list of organizations, institutions and sources of leadership in the village:

- branch of the party and party chairman
- kraal heads and village headmen
- agricultural groups: (a) registered co-op; (b) savings club
- women's production co-ops
- adult literacy class
- defunct youth group
- village health assistant and clinic (10 miles away in a neighbouring village)
- agricultural extension worker (who visits the area)
- primary school and school teachers
- day-care or creche located in the school
- demobilized fighters, mujibas and chimbwidos (local contacts and supporters for the fighters)
- Jerusarema group and other cultural groups
- churches (three)

For the rest of the workshop we commuted each day to the village from our base in the Murewa Secondary School. Our daily schedule usually went like this:

6:00- 7:00	Cold showers and physical exercises (for some)
7:00- 8:00	Breakfast
8:00- 8:30	Plenary session (every second day)
8:30-10:00	Team meeting (evaluation and planning)
10:00-10:30	Travel to the village
10:30-11:00	Arrangements for meeting place
11:00- 4:00	Work with villagers
4:00- 4:30	Return to workshop centre
5:30- 7:00	Workshop steering committee
7:00- 8:00	Supper
8:00-10:00	Evening program (for all participants)
10:00-11:30	Socializing at the local bar

Day 4 (Thursday)

On our first day in the village a mid-day public meeting had been arranged for us by Comrade Hunda. Before the meeting we met briefly with branch leaders of the party, introducing ourselves and explaining our aims. (The Zimbabwean organizers had already arranged permission for us to work in the village, so this was more of a formality and a chance to get to know the village leaders.) Then we broke into prearranged pairs (one Shona-speaker in each pair) and toured the community on foot, talking with people in their homesteads, visiting some of the institutions mentioned by Hunda (e.g. ZANU/PF office, school, bottle store), and getting some initial impressions of the community. One of our first visual impressions was the large number of women lined up at the well and the long distance between homesteads. With people living so far apart, we wondered how it would be possible to get people to come together for our meetings.

There is no real centre to the village — only four shops and the party office at the main road, and the nearby school, which provide a focus for some community interaction. The homesteads spread out in all directions around them in a four- to five-mile radius (so "spread out" that the village health worker had trouble reaching all of them on a regular basis). What became immediately apparent, simply from observation, was

- the large outmigration of men from the area (a 30-40% estimate was given)
- the bulk of rural work (household and agricultural tasks) being done by the women
- high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people, who were hanging around the shops with nothing to do and itching to leave for town
- low agricultural production (due to land shortage, the poor soils and, this year, the drought) and the dependence on wage remittances and store-bought goods (including food)
- inflated prices in the shops, explained as the result of high transport costs
- the buses which came thundering through the village, already full, and rarely stopped.

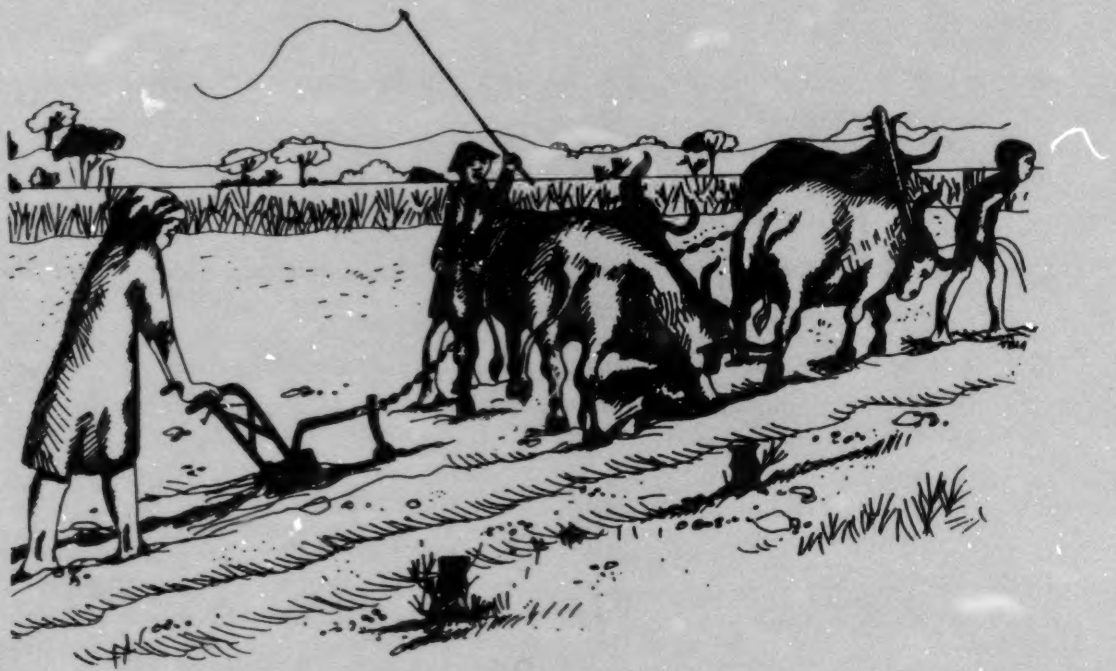
These problems were of course widespread throughout the communal lands — the result of systematic underdevelopment and neglect perpetrated by the colonial regime (which required a pressure point to produce African labour for the white farms, mines and industry, and a way of stopping African competition with white commercial farmers). The Zimbabwe government is making ambitious changes to this inequitable structure:

- rebuilding schools, clinics, roads, and dip-tanks destroyed during the war, and rapidly expanding these facilities
- organizing a massive resettlement program for refugees and the landless, and support for the development of production co-ops
- developing income-earning activities for women, a national literacy campaign, and support for agricultural production
- reviving and revitalizing community development which was discredited during the Smith regime (because of its tokenism and association with state repression).

One of the people we met on the village walkabout was a primary school teacher who told us that teachers had played a pivotal role in the revolution — politicizing villagers, recruiting combatants, and organizing support in the villages. He regretted that the conditions of service now prevented teachers from continuing their active involvement in party politics. He also complained about the lack of activities for youth in Muchinjike and said this was responsible for their "alienation" and "misbehaviour" (heavy drinking, dagga-smoking, etc.). There were tremendous expectations created by the war, he said — some of these were alleviated by the rapid expansion of schools, but other youth were still waiting for opportunities (for training or employment). He said that the women who had started a number of production co-ops were the most active force in the village. Most of the men were away in town, coming back at month-end to visit their families, and therefore were unavailable for village development activities. He finished by saying:

> *We worked collectively, formed committees, and pulled together during the war when the morale was high. Since then we've lost some of that unity and community spirit. Maybe you can help us do something to revive that spirit.*

A group we talked to explained that some families only grew enough for subsistence, while others produced both subsistence and cash crops. The main constraints were land, the ownership of oxen (for ploughing), access to loans (for fertilizer), and labour (some men sent money to hire labour for ploughing).



They explained that most households could not produce enough to survive on and were dependent on remittances from the men away in town. Female-headed households, without a wage-earner to depend on, had real trouble producing enough to feed their families. Other activities relied on for subsistence and/or cash included beer-brewing, basket-making, vegetable-growing, chicken-raising, pig-rearing, tailoring, blacksmithing, hiring one's labour, or petty trade. Because of the drought, supplementary food (maize meal, beans, groundnuts, oil) was being distributed by the government to the homesteads.

The public meeting was arranged at the homestead of a prosperous peasant farmer, Comrade Guhwa. He welcomed us and proudly showed off his spears, bow and arrows, and handmade guitars. (Later on, when he got to know us better, he showed us one of his inventions — a bicycle-driven bellows for a blacksmith's kiln, an amazing example of peasant innovativeness). Guhwa and his wife became major supporters of our work, joining us each day and taking a lead in the drama-making in which they both excelled. Guhwa clearly loved the play-acting and whenever he met us he confronted us in mock anger and threatened to beat us. One day he appeared out of nowhere on the main road and, equipped with bow and arrow, staged a simulated attack on our bus.

The public meeting was arranged in an open area between Guhwa's rondavels and a large tree. The female team members sat with a large group of women on mats on the ground, while the men enjoyed the luxury of stools and benches in the shade. The local men included a few party officials, three kraal heads, and a number of older men. There were no middle-aged men or youth. Older men (in small numbers) and women of all ages (in large numbers) made up the "audience" or co-participants in the remainder of the workshop.

We started off with an exchange of songs, teaching some ourselves and asking the villagers to teach us some. This set the right spirit — of greetings, of two-way learning, of solidarity — and inspired the village women who simply took over the session and turned it into a spontaneous celebration.

Nothing could have prepared us for the women's dynamic response! It simply overwhelmed us. We had come thinking we had something to offer and something to learn. But we didn't expect the tremendous outpouring of songs, dances and games. It showed we would have no trouble getting the villagers to participate; if anything, we would need to "shake a leg" — several legs — to match their spirit!

Our fears that the scattered pattern of settlement would inhibit participation were also proved groundless. The villagers were more than willing to come together and participate. Their vibrant response also demonstrated that they had a great deal to contribute, that the interaction could be a genuine dialogue — with initiative coming as much from them as from us. These songs and dances greeted us whenever we started our work in the villages, showing the tremendous self-confidence and spirit triggered off by the liberation struggle.

After half an hour of songs, the formal part of the meeting got under way. The branch chairman of ZANU/PF welcomed and introduced us and led a round of party slogans. Then we explained the purpose of our work.

We described our objectives as

- to get to know the people and for them to know us (knowing their lives, their problems, their concerns, their aspirations)
- to exchange songs and dances
- to work together in developing drama
- to use drama-making as a way of discussing problems and looking for solutions
- to use a performance as a way of bringing the community together and agreeing on solutions and action.

By this time close to eighty people had gathered. We broke the meeting into four groups — older men, young women, older women, and women's co-op — and assigned two or three members of our team to work with each group. The discussions worked well. People seemed enthusiastic about giving their views. They also wanted to know how the information would be used and if it was going to help them in any way. We explained that it wasn't a survey — we were simply trying to understand the problems better so we could work with the villagers in analyzing the information and looking for solutions. We discouraged the idea of our data-gathering resulting in a new government service or other solutions generated from outside the community. The idea was for the villagers to do their own thinking and work out their own solutions. In addition to gathering information and clarifying the purpose of the work, we also worked hard at getting to know the villagers and motivating them to come back the following day. We tried to identify existing organized groups in the village which might be willing to meet with us on a regular basis.

At the end of the group discussions, we reconvened the meeting, explained the purpose of the meeting on the following day, and finished off with another exchange of songs.

That evening the team met at the workshop site and shared what we had learned. The next morning we listed all the information on newsprint, organizing it under different headings (see the following two pages).

COMMUNITY ISSUES

PRODUCTION

- the major constraint is land — there is very little, and the soil is poor
- those without oxen have to borrow from others, working for them first
- the poor cannot buy seeds and fertilizer, and tend to be excluded from co-op membership because of fears about loan repayment
- men working in towns often hire labour for ploughing
- major constraints for cash crop producers: transport and marketing

CO-OPS

- need to form co-op in order to get loans from government (for buying fertilizer, equipment, etc.)
- lots of concern re loan repayment after the poor harvest (people felt the repayment period was too short)
- two forms of farmers' organizations: a) government-registered co-op, b) Catholic savings club (mainly for poor farmers)
- 10 women's production co-ops: some sew school uniforms, others raise pigs and poultry

LAND RESETTLEMENT

- land not enough for young people, especially the newly married
- resentment that some land is given unfairly or given to people who are too old
- resistance to resettlement: a) having to leave homes, graves; b) lack of information about infrastructure provided at resettlement area (loans, equipment, etc.)

WATER

- drought — cattle die — diarrhoea and malnutrition
- long distance to river/well/borehole and long line-ups to get water
- new boreholes needed: request to government turned down — government drilling machines taken to more desperate areas
- people selling water to each other

EDUCATION

- no primary school fees, but there is a building fund; people said that primary education was not free because they had to pay income tax
- people hard-pressed to pay secondary school fee because of drought: few could afford to send their children to secondary school
- effect of war and colonial regime: not enough schools, damaged buildings, undertrained teachers
- adult literacy classes mainly attended by women

WOMEN

- husbands away in towns: squandering money on girlfriends and beer; neglecting families
- women left behind in the village: doing all the farming and household tasks; dependence on wages from town
- female-headed households having trouble producing/earning enough to feed their families
- traditionally men paid for major items such as school uniforms, clothing, etc. — now more and more the responsibility of women, out of their meagre sources of cash
- teenage pregnancies: grandmother responsible for raising the children
- marriage customs commercialized — brideprice exorbitant

YOUTH

- unemployment and lack of income-earning or training opportunities — frustration — resort to drinking, dagga
- generation gap: elders feel youth no longer respect them and are forgetting their traditions
- Youth Brigade: formed 1982; seeds and rabbits promised; no action
- demobilized fighters: some have found jobs or training opportunities, others are still waiting

TOWN-VILLAGE RELATIONSHIP

- large numbers of breadwinners working in towns: a) family tensions; b) dependence on urban wages
- high price of consumer goods in the shops
- transport: difficult to get on bus — doesn't stop at small communities — difficult to get vegetables to the Murewa market
- concern that most benefits of Independence going to the towns

COMMUNICATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT

- insufficient information and lack of knowledge on certain government projects (e.g. resettlement, loans)
- concern about lack of communication between different levels of authority
- concerns about nepotism or favouritism in the distribution of resources

Day 5 (Friday)

The next day, when we got to the village, we found a large group waiting for us at Guhwa's place. We started with another exchange of songs, introducing each song with clapping or a dance step and encouraging everyone to join in. Two of the villagers' songs provided the rhythm for games, one involving a long line of dancers each taking a turn dancing backwards over a long stick, the other a complicated dance-step over two sticks being raised and lowered (which Ghonche mastered and received cheers in tribute).

In another song we encouraged the addition of mime actions, showing all the forms of work done by women — planting, weeding, harvesting, fetching water and firewood, cooking, etc. Later we discovered the women also used mime in their songs. For example, in one of the liberation songs, the women acted out how the freedom fighters hunted down Smith's security officers (District Assistants), holding branches in front of them to simulate guerilla camouflage and stalking another woman as she fled out of the compound. In another song a woman mimed how she pretended to be sick when her in-laws came to visit, but when her own relatives arrived she "recovered" instantly!

Our main objective for the day was to discuss the information we had collected on the first day. However, opportunity knocked: the initial songs, dances, games and mime flowed naturally into role-playing and we decided to move with the current, using the role-playing as a means for elaborating the issues, rather than moving to a formalized discussion. We discovered not only that this was more fun but that it actually worked as a means of eliciting villagers' perceptions on various problems. At the same time, it helped to establish the basic idea of the workshop — the use of dramatization, songs, dance, and mime as a means of talking about and deepening understanding of important local issues. Finally, it showed that the villagers' own role-plays could be used as the starting point for the dramatization-analysis process.

Guhwa got the process going. At the end of a song about a lazy farmer he walked into the centre of the circle and started an improvisation on the problems of farming. This sketch was followed by some more songs and another sketch, and this became the standard pattern: songs — role-play — songs — role-play.... (This mixed-media format, drawing on contributions from everyone, is the basic structure of the pungwe.)

Once we had discovered this natural form for the work, we encouraged the villagers to improvise sketches on other issues. We did this in a fairly unobtrusive way, simply passing the message through one of our Shona speakers to one of the villagers we had become familiar with. The contact person recruited a few actors, worked out with them the gist of the play, and came into the circle to start the improvisation. This allowed the process to flow fairly naturally without a lot of stop/start, highly visible intervention.

One of the skits suggested was on co-operatives. This improvisation fell a bit flat, turning into a question-and-answer session on the objectives and merits of co-ops, with no problem or dramatic conflict. We tried to intervene by sending in a new character (Hunda) from the sidelines, briefed to raise the loans issue (an issue mentioned the day before), but it didn't work. Nevertheless, this discussion (in the form of a drama) triggered off some interest and soon members of the audience joined in, standing up to give their views on co-ops, an older man raising the issue of traditional forms of cooperation (nhimbe) and the women giving their history of the sewing co-op. The difference between a drama and a discussion became blurred and it turned into a full-blown, highly participatory discussion.

In our post-mortem at the end of the day, we agreed that one of the dangers at this stage of popular theatre work is for the outsiders to impose an analysis rather than to remain open to villagers' own perspectives on their problems. If we had attempted to continue to shape the drama from the sidelines, we would have put our own ideas into the drama and would have missed out on the rich detail provided by the villagers and the perspectives and sense of priorities they clarified. By limiting our intervention, we allowed things to emerge in the way the villagers perceived them, giving us a clearer, less biased starting point for the work.

With the exception of the co-op drama, all the sketches were lively and full of fun. However, many of the sketches had a tendency to moralize. For example, a play on teenage pregnancy concluded with the girl losing a paternity case and being disowned by her father. To rub the point in deeper, the father then divorced his wife for failing to discipline the girl.

In the day's post-mortem we agreed that we should try to move the villagers beyond this kind of moralizing to a more complex interpretation of the issues involved. We speculated that the problem of teenage pregnancy was more than just a matter of "the erosion of traditional values" or an "overindulgent mother" or "poor discipline at boarding schools." It also involved pressures on unemployed, poorly educated young women whose options after primary school were very limited, creating the potential for sexual exploitation. We also noted that the pressures on men to go to the towns for work put a greater burden on the women who remained behind in the villages, including the sole responsibility for raising and teaching the children and looking after their daughters' children.

The day ended in very high spirits with more songs and a number of performances by the local Jerusarema group. Jerusarema involves rhythmic clapping by a team of 10-15 performers, each beating two flat pieces of wood together while a few team members take turns dancing. It started in the Murewa area during the war and spread like wildfire through the villages, becoming the most popular form of cultural expression.

Jerusarema is episodic in structure: sustained bursts of clapping and dancing culminate in a distinctive final beat (and dance movement) after which there is a short, 4-second pause for dancers and clappers to catch their breath and then another round of feverish clapping and dancing starts again. Once it gets going, it's difficult to resist. We all got hooked and jumped into the circle to try out the hip-swinging dance.

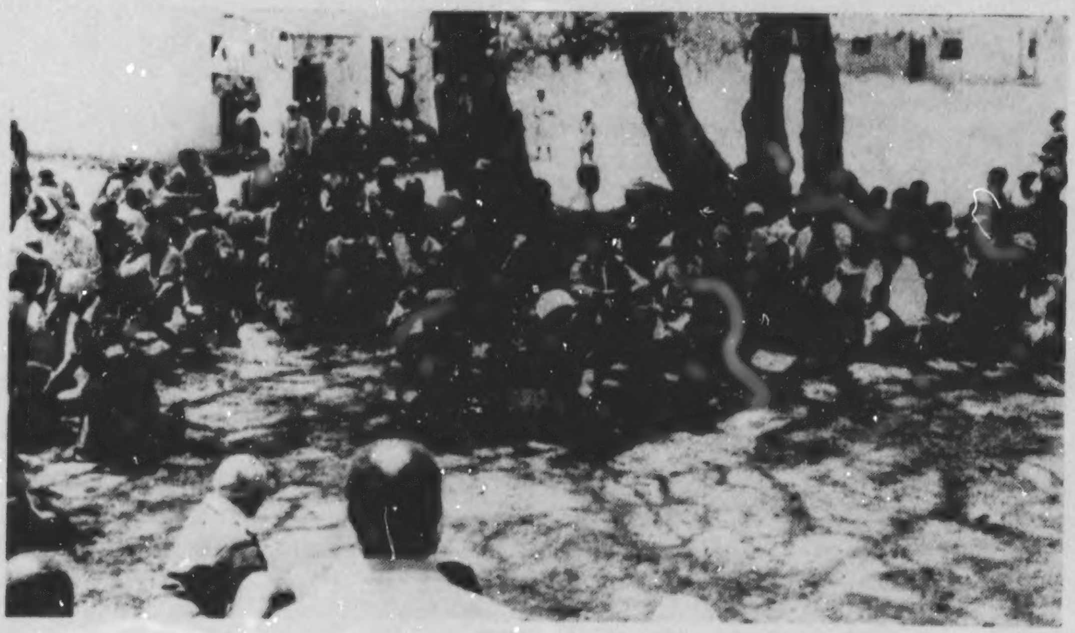
Jerusarema generates the same dance fever and the same feeling of collective creation as steel drumming in the eastern Caribbean. And, like steel pan, it is a contemporary creation produced by the grassroots for their own entertainment. It is art — a people's art — and people take great pride in it, putting a lot of disciplined work into polishing its performance and adding innovations.

The day was a good start to the work. Over 200 people had joined us by the end of the afternoon, attracted by the singing and drumming. We were able to identify a number of people who wanted to work with us, in particular the women who had responded so enthusiastically, contributing songs, dances, role-plays and an infectious spirit.

The session clarified the form for the theatre work. Instead of imposing an alien form, we found we could work within the people's own performance traditions, incorporating and building on their songs, dances, and sketches and on the pungwe structure itself. This in turn helped to reinforce their self-confidence — they saw that they had relevant skills and experience to contribute and that their ideas and thinking were crucial to the process.

The experience also helped to clarify our objectives. The villagers were already accustomed to improvization and the creation of their own sketches. Our task was to show (a) how the improvization and drama-making process itself could be used as the basis for discussing important issues; and (b) how the analysis and reshaping of villagers' own improvised sketches could deepen their understanding of the problems.

Our job was to introduce supplementary objectives and skills to the existing pungwe structure, creating a more deliberate process of popular education than may have been apparent in the pungwe historically. Our task was to show that villagers' creativity could be more than an expression of community identity — it could also be an active force in the development of the community.



Day 6 (Saturday)

Saturday was a low day. Many team members had disappeared off to Harare for the weekend. We held a morning session at the workshop centre, wanting to analyze the data on our own and deepen our own understanding before returning to work further with the villagers. Our analysis took a number of forms:

- checking out the accuracy of the reported information and identifying the gaps in the data
- identifying contradictions in the information
- discussing each problem and trying to distinguish root causes from symptoms, e.g., youth delinquency is a symptom of other more fundamental problems — unemployment, rapid changes in social and economic structures, etc.
- analyzing the connections between problems, e.g., shortage of land — outmigration to the towns for work — shortage of labour for agricultural production — increase in women's workload in the village — decrease in parental control over youth
- asking questions about power, such as "Who decides?"; e.g., women do most of the work in agricultural production, yet have no say in the marketing of the crops
- examining the differences between perceptions of various sectors — men and women, older people and youth, leaders and ordinary villagers, etc.
- discussing the relative priority of issues (from the team's perspective, from the perspective of various sectors of the village); e.g., shortage of water is a high-priority problem only for those who cannot afford their own well
- looking at the historical dimension, e.g., land shortage and the need for the resettlement program is a direct consequence of settler appropriation of African land during the colonial era
- discussing what people have already done about the problems, and the constraints on action
- examining possible solutions and the constraints on possible solutions
- discussing the possible source of the solution — is it dependent on government support or is it something the villagers can do on their own?

In the analysis, we made some of the following points:

- Water, land, draught power, capital and labour are key constraints on production: without (a) water, (b) sufficient and fertile land, (c) oxen to plough, (d) money to buy fertilizer, tools, etc., (e) sufficient labour (with breadwinners away working in the town) — production remains low.
- Cattle ownership is a major determinant of class.
- Poor families without oxen seem to have less opportunity to get loans and extension advice (much less likely to become "master farmers" or co-op members, given their resource constraints), cannot afford secondary school fees, and cannot afford to pay for water.
- In the colonial era, the insufficient and infertile land and the limited opportunities in the communal lands forced people to migrate to the towns in search of wage labour.
- Outmigration to the towns drains off labour from the village, increases the burdens on women, and makes women dependent on remittances from the men.
- Resettlement policy attempts to equalize opportunities, allocating land to poor, landless families.
- Women's production co-ops are a response to the need of rural women for an independent source of income.

We then focused on the link between education and production, and attempted to identify some of the contradictions — for example,

- Education is meant to prepare people for production, yet often the skills are inappropriate (e.g. for agricultural production) and the expectations created (e.g. for urban white-collar employment) cannot be satisfied. -- The Zimbabwe "Education with Production" policy is meant to overcome this contradiction.
- Education is viewed as a road out of poverty, yet secondary school fees limit universal access and tend to reinforce class divisions.
- Historically, the position of a village in relation to an educational centre was a key factor in the village's possibilities within the colonial system.

We finished with some practice on the dramatization-and-analysis process, in preparation for the following week. We started off by asking team members to identify a commonly experienced contradiction. They raised the school fees issue, so we asked them to think of a situation in which this issue could be projected. They suggested a scene where a daughter wants to leave school to get married. They tried this out. We (the resource persons) stopped them after a while, asked for comments, and encouraged them to decide on a new direction. The session was brief but it gave people a fresh idea of the process.

On Saturday afternoon workshop participants took part in a huge pungwe, along with village cultural groups from all over the district. Competition, which has become the major focus of officially-sponsored cultural gatherings, was played down and the pungwe spirit of participation took its place. Adjudicators and prizes were eliminated, and even the perk of free beer was chopped. Villagers were invited to come for the sheer joy of performing and exchanging with each other and the international participants. Contrary to negative predictions, villagers pitched up in huge numbers and had a great time. The village groups and the internationals took turns performing, often teaching each other their songs and joining in each other's dances in a spirit of celebration.

Day 7 (Monday)

On Monday we returned to Muchinjike — with the aim of deepening the analysis. The women in our team had arranged to meet with the women's co-op and made it clear that this would be more productive without the men in the team joining in. So the men sat down with a small group of older men at Guhwa's place.

We started off asking about production. The men talked about ownership of oxen, loans, rainfall, labour, fertilizer, transport, etc., but their main preoccupation was land. Without any prompting they gave us a history of the land crisis: being pushed off their land by white settlers in the early 1900s and herded into the reserves, finding it more and more difficult to survive on the poor soils and overcrowded land, being forced by the deteriorating situation and other pressures (e.g. taxation) to migrate to the towns in search of work (in order to support their families who remained behind on the reserve).

Guhwa then picked up the story:

> In the '50s the old regime introduced a new law, allocating land to each family as their own property to be bought and sold. Before this land had been communal, allocated by the headman to families for ploughing. The new law made many people landless, especially those working in the towns, and created greater pressure in the reserves. This is when the struggle for land really started.

A Zimbabwean team member then joined in to explain that by the mid-sixties, due to nationalist pressure, the Land Husbandry Act had to be revoked and land allocation given back to the chiefs and headmen. But by this time the situation had become a major crisis. Land became the rallying point for the liberation struggle.

Another team member then added that the Land Husbandry Act was aimed at creating a landed class of peasant farmers who could buttress the colonial system. He also mentioned the Master Farmer Scheme, which had supported richer peasants with loans, extension advice, etc., and encouraged them to take up individual plots in the Native Purchase Lands.

We then asked about other ways in which individualization had been promoted and communal practices undermined. People talked about the breakdown in traditional forms of cooperation and mutual support due to the pressures of the colonial system:

> *In the past we always helped each other. People with lots of cattle used to loan cattle to others to help them survive, giving them the milk, draught power, and some of the offspring. But this became more and more difficult. Those looking after the cattle would get caught at the government dip tank, and charged for the cattle...and this caused problems with the owner.*
>
> *In the past we used to work together. Someone would brew beer and everyone would join in and help - harvesting, weeding, putting up a new house, helping with other things. But now people are forgetting nhimbe (cooperative work). Everything is for money - you have to pay people if you want them to work for you.*

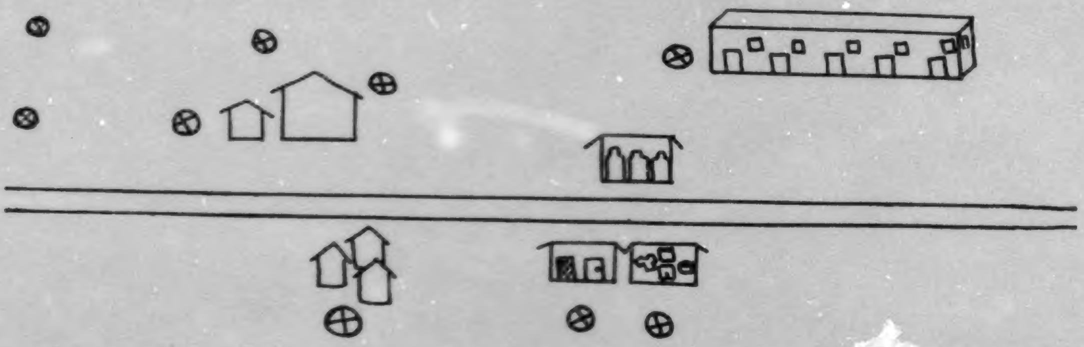
One team member then raised the water problem:

> *I went to look at the well. They put down the pail but very little came out. How do people get water?*

Guhwa replied,

> *I have my own borehole. I built it myself. I used to allow others to use it but now there is only enough for my own family.*

This was an eye-opener! We had thought of the water problem as something affecting everyone in the village equally; we had assumed that water was communal. Through more questioning we discovered that all of the water in the village except the school borehole was privately owned. Guhwa drew a map in the sand, showing the different boreholes and explaining that one owner had five boreholes — four for his own use and one for the community. We also learned that the school borehole, which had been built by the whole community, was only accessible to those who contributed money for diesel (to run the borehole engine).

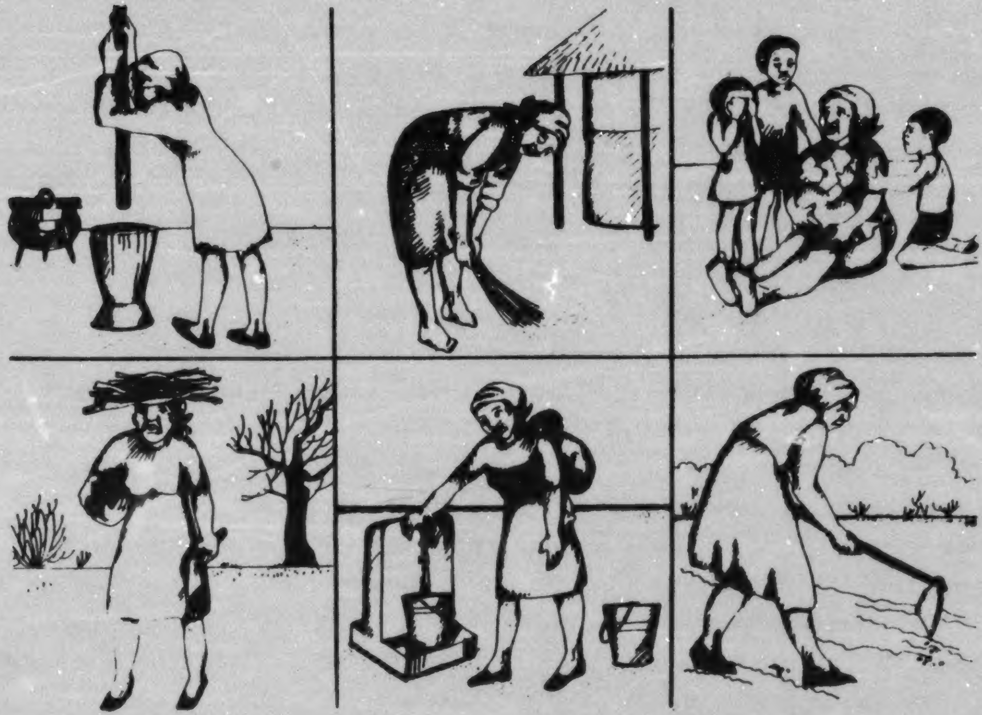


We then turned the discussion back to the land question. Guhwa said that land shortage mainly affected young people — they were the people who needed to be resettled. He talked about his own sons who had completed secondary school and were now working in town. (When Guhwa was younger he had run a tailoring shop in town and at the same time kept cattle. He sold off many of his cattle to put his sons and daughters through school.) Guhwa wanted it to be possible for his three sons to send their wives to the resettlement area, since he had not enough land for his sons in his own plot. He had heard talk that once the poor were resettled, wage-earners might have access to land in the resettlement area.

We used Guhwa's life history to raise the issue of education and the rural-urban conflict. Guhwa in an earlier conversation had said, "If everyone goes to town, there will be no one to do the ploughing... and people will starve." We reminded him about this and asked him why he had struggled to put his children through school. He explained that he wanted his children to have a stable future and education provided a ticket to a steady job in town. His sons were now supporting him — that is to say, wage labour in town was subsidizing people's survival in the village. We then restated the apparent contradiction — that the town depended on the rural areas for food, yet people were trying to get their children educated and out of the rural areas so they can get wage-earning jobs in town. We talked about this some more and a few team members expressed the view that while a white-collar job in town was the best prospect, agriculture was a viable option and government was creating the necessary incentives to support peasant farming (resettlement schemes, loans, co-ops, extension workers trained to work in the communal lands, etc.).

At this point we had been talking without a break for two and a half hours, so we ended the meeting and walked back to the pick-up point. While we were waiting for Elineth, Janet, and Martha, we chatted with a number of people. Our longest chat was with three young women who, we discovered, had recently got married. Two of the husbands were former freedom-fighters who now worked in the national army; the third was a farmer. The women said their families were relatively poor, although the wages from the army made a big difference. All had stopped education at the end of primary school because their parents couldn't afford secondary school fees. They felt that the options for young women without education were limited — domestic work, working in stores, or vegetable-selling in town...or getting married.

The woman married to the farmer said that they had little land and depended on the father-in-law (who owned much more land) for their survival. Their land was poor — stony and steep — and fertilizer seemed to make little difference. She said they'd like to go to the resettlement area if they could get their own oxen and ploughing equipment which they now borrowed from their father-in-law.



Elineth, Janet, and Martha then returned and reported on their meeting with the women's group. The women had welcomed them with songs: a song about the "burdens of women" led naturally into a discussion about the burdens women face when their husbands go off to town. The women also talked about

- the growing problem of teenage pregnancy (and the increased workload and financial strain on women)
- their worries about unemployed youth
- the problems of production co-ops (the women said they needed sewing machines to increase production).

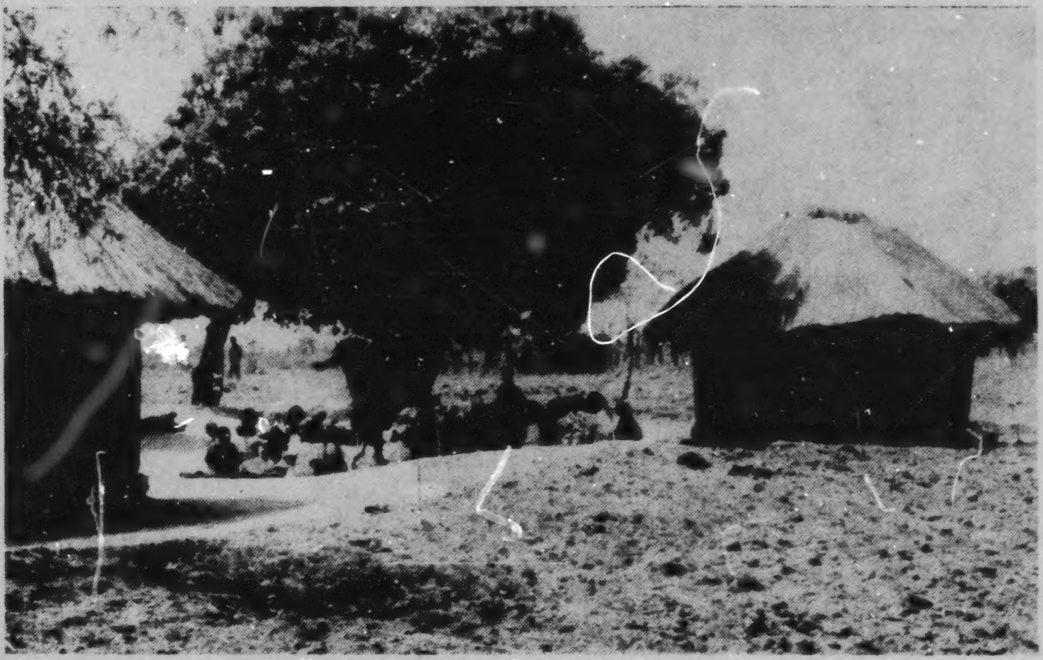
The women's group then put on two skits which they had prepared beforehand. One was about wife-beating (precipitated by a wife's complaint about her husband's neglect). The second was a moralizing drama showing two families — one full of conflicts because of an ill-kept, dirty household, the other a haven of peace because the wife learned to please her husband by joining a women's club. Both were full of fun, due to the characterizations of the men. The team members wanted to challenge the moralizing in the second drama, but decided to leave it for the following day.

The women's session worked extremely well. The group was homogeneous and had a history of working together. Through their collective production of school uniforms the women had already tackled their most fundmental problem — the need for an independent source of income. The women's self-confidence and organizational unity provided a solid base for this kind of work. Unfortunately, this was the last time we worked with the group entirely on their own, although many of the group members participated in the open community meetings.

Day 8 (Tuesday)

The next day was one of our most successful days. It started out in an inauspicious way. When we arrived in Muchinjike we were told we'd meet in a new place — to avoid feelings of jealousy by other villagers against Guhwa. We would have preferred to continue meeting at Guhwa's place — to sustain the same atmosphere and participation — but we deferred to local experience.

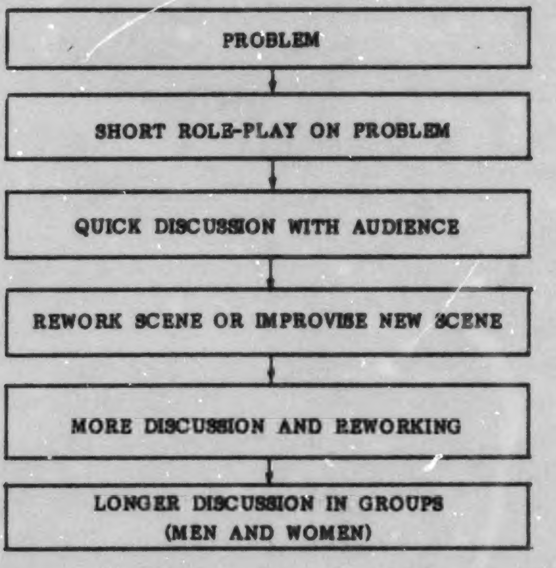
We were escorted to a new homestead which seemed bleak and deserted. The head of the household had recently died and many of the children were away working in town. Dust was blowing in all directions, a few skinny dogs wandered out to look at us, and we wondered how we could achieve the same spirit and easy-going communication in a wind-swept and deserted courtyard. So we retreated to one end of the compound, using one of the huts as a windbreak and a nearby tree for shade. Somehow this created the right atmosphere: the women's group and a few men pitched up, and we got down to work.



The team was in good spirits. Earlier that morning, while the meeting place was being chosen, we met and built up some energy and a collective feeling through songs and games. One game became our favourite — a greetings game that suited all the languages in our group. In the game two persons race around the circle in opposite directions and when they meet, they have to stop and go through an elaborate ritual of greetings in any language they choose before racing to the point of origin. This was such good fun, with so much room for improvisation, that we later used it with the villagers.

Up until this point in the workshop, the process had been a warm-up and introduction: establishing a relationship, explaining the objectives of the work, encouraging the villagers to express themselves, identifying the major issues, and clarifying the role of the villagers' own performance forms and performance structures. The next phase (of five days) was to facilitate a sustained process of dramatization and analysis with the villagers using scenario-making and improvization as the means of presenting and focusing discussion on (a) each problem, (b) its underlying causes, (c) the obstacles which prevented people from taking action, (d) suggested solutions, (e) the consequences of those solutions, and (f) ways of implementing those solutions.

The strategy we adopted for the day was to take each of the major issues in turn, structure a short role-play to focus the issue, and then with the help of the villagers extend the role-play through analysis and further improvisation. The performing took place in the centre of the circle and the discussion, which followed each role-play, took place on the sidelines. This became the established structure for the balance of the workshop.


PROBLEM
SHORT ROLE-PLAY ON PROBLEM
QUICK DISCUSSION WITH AUDIENCE
REWORK SCENE OR IMPROVISE NEW SCENE
MORE DISCUSSION AND REWORKING
LONGER DISCUSSION IN GROUPS (MEN AND WOMEN)

We started with the water issue. Elineth, Janet, and Martha put on a short mime to get things going — a fight at a private borehole. In the discussion afterwards someone said that water at the school was available only to people who contributed to the diesel. A woman added that many people were too poor to pay for the diesel. We then replayed the drama, this time with the villagers as actors.

Scene 1: Fight scene at the private borehole.
Scene 2: Woman complains to husband.
Scene 3: Women tries to get water at school borehole — another fight.

In the discussion the following points emerged:

- Poor people were using and reusing the little water they were able to get.
- Families contributed indirectly to the borehole fund since their children worked in the school garden which earned money for the borehole. Nonetheless, if parents couldn't make a cash contribution they couldn't use the borehole.
- Teachers didn't need to pay for the water.
- People defended the water payment policy, saying that parents living at a distance from the school (i.e. too far to benefit from the use of the school water) would complain if the water was distributed free of charge.

We then shifted to the school fees issue. Guhwa agreed to play the father of a child who has just completed primary school. The first time through he played the role of a rich peasant (which he is in real life) and took a conservative position, refusing to sell his cattle to pay the secondary school fees. In the discussion, people suggested we change the drama, making Guhwa a poor peasant who can't afford the school fees. When the scene was replayed, Guhwa threw in a new decision, going to a neighbour to ask for a loan. This produced a ripple of comment from the villagers, so we stopped the drama and asked, "Is this realistic?" Guhwa said yes but the rest of the audience disagreed, saying it was unlikely that a poor person would be given $150-200 as a personal loan. We then asked about other options. Mrs. Guhwa suggested a bursary but the other women questioned this, saying that very few people received bursaries.

We then moved to the resettlement issue, saying this was one of the options for primary school leavers who couldn't afford secondary school. We asked two men to play a scene where a son asks his father's permission to go to the resettlement area. We left the father's role open. He adopted a traditionalist position, arguing against the move because of the strong cultural attachment to the area — "What will our ancestors say? What about our family graves?" Afterwards we broke the men and women into two groups and asked each to discuss the benefits of resettlement and the reasons why people were hesitant about going to the resettlement area.

The following views emerged:

> *Young people have no land. They want land so they can help themselves.*
>
> *Without cattle in the new area what will we use for ploughing?*
>
> *Resettling people as individuals rather than families creates problems: sons will have difficulty in the new areas without access to their father's oxen or equipment. The fathers won't be able to plough on their own. Sons may forget to send their parents food from the resettlement area. Why not resettle them as a family unit?*
>
> *People are resettled together from different areas. It will take time for people to get used to each other and work together. How will people borrow oxen or ploughing equipment from strangers? Why not try to resettle people from the same area as a co-op?*
>
> *What about schools? When will government build schools and other facilities in the resettlement areas?*

Comrade Hunda responded to all of these points. He explained that the land would be ploughed for new settlers; that there was an age limit (18-40); that there was nothing stopping a father from accompanying a son but that only the son would be given land if the father was over 40; that government planned to build schools in the resettlement areas. He also corrected a mistaken impression that only married couples could resettle.

The discussion was so rich that we decided to dramatize the scene again, adding all the new detail. Then we broke for lunch, our two loaves and no fishes distributed among the multitudes. There was little break — the songs, and even some dancing, continued over lunch.

After lunch we turned to the women's issues. The women's group put on the wife-beating drama. When the men saw the women caricaturing them, they put on their own version of the same issue, improvising a sketch showing the infidelity of their wives as the justification for the beating.

We began the discussion as a large group, but when the men started to do all the talking we broke again into two groups. In retrospect this was counterproductive: while this gave the women a chance to talk about the issue on their own, without being dominated, it left the two perspectives on the problem in isolation and missed the opportunity of using the divergence of opinion to stimulate the debate. As a result, the men's discussion took a traditionalist (chauvinist) and self-justifying direction, rather than a more analytical look at male-female relations:

> *If a husband doesn't beat his wife, she will overrule him.*

This was a brutally honest explanation of wife-beating — the need to ensure wives' compliance to husbands' control (over the household, their wives' labour, and the product of their labour). Their other comments showed their resentment of their wives' overt and subtle resistance to this domination:

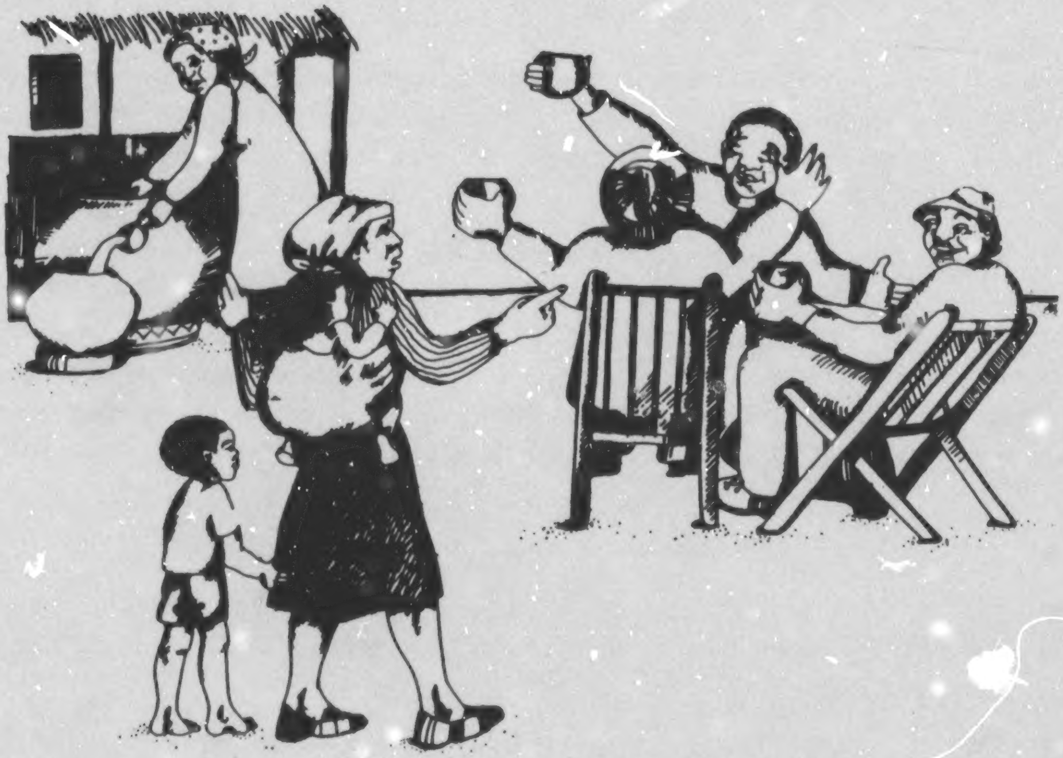
> *Women are the root cause of the problem - they are lazy to wash, take a long time to wash our shirts, do their household tasks poorly, and always want us to go for work.*
>
> *Whenever I try to advise my children, my wife interferes and contradicts me. In the old days the sons used to stay with their father in the "court" but now they stay in the kitchen so no one gives them the rules.*
>
> *When our children grow up, they turn against us, showing they're more devoted to the mother. My wife tells me - if you trouble me, I'll go and stay with my son in town.*

Through more questioning the men admitted that part of the problem was their womanizing, their neglect of the family when they went to town, and their drinking. Someone qualified this, saying that only rich peasants could afford to drink a lot. This was contradicted by another, who said that only lazy people drank too much. We tried to push the discussion towards an analysis of women's labour (both in the household and on the farm) and women's lack of say in the use of their husbands' wages or the surplus produced by women's labour, but we didn't succeed.

The women's discussion, on the other hand, made great gains. They said they had fought the war and wanted to see things change. They wanted to maintain the independence they had gained during the war, when they performed not only support roles but also more active ones, including taking up guns themselves. They said they should have equal rights with men, in the home and on the farm.

Their report made the following points:

> *Our husbands suspect us (of infidelity) when we delay at the well but it only indicates their own guilty consciences.*
>
> *They never give us money to buy soap nor do they help solve the water problem yet they despise us for being dirty.*
>
> *We do all the work on the land yet when the crops are sold we have no say in what happens to the money. We should share it.*
>
> *We struggle to find money to pay for school uniforms and other things. But when they (the husbands) get money we never see it.*
>
> *Women need to earn money because we need to cope on our own when husbands don't send money. That's why we started the sewing co-op.*
>
> *Our husbands have to go to town to find work. But they spend the money on beer and girlfriends. We propose as a solution that instead of waiting for the money we go to town at month end to get the money.*



The women's discussion showed tremendous potential. They recognized the contradiction between their major involvement in producing the cash crops and their lack of control over the product of their labour. Some talked to us privately about going with their husbands to the Grain Marketing Board to see how much their husbands received. While these ideas still remained at a talking stage, it showed the growing consciousness among the women about their oppression and the potential for active resistance, possibly through the leadership of the women's co-ops. The co-ops already represented a certain assertion of independence by the women — a means of earning an additional source of income entirely under their own control.

But we didn't take the discussion any further. It was late in the day and we decided to finish the session. We had been meeting for over four and a half hours with everyone concentrated and focused and involved — a good indication that the "process" was working. Team members reinforced this view in the day's evaluation. Comrade Hunda said the activity was "very educational and concerned with the villagers' fundamental problems." Kalengay, the newly-arrived member from Zaire, was "very excited.... The villagers understood our objectives quickly and were free in expressing their problems and looking for solutions. The contradictions and tensions between men an women, young and old, rich and poor, came out so clearly. Now our job is to get the villagers to find some workable solutions."

We had also discovered some new sources of leadership. Florence, a younger woman who had served as a chimbwido (a go-between providing information and supplies to the fighters) emerged as the spokesperson and a key organizer of the women's group. (We later learned she was Hunda's daughter.) A schoolteacher also joined us for the first time and became a key member of the group, playing an important role as an interpreter and a discussion leader.

This day demonstrated the complexity of the job of "animating" this process. We discovered that animation involved a range of tasks, including:

- organizing the meeting's agenda so that it included the right essentials — e.g., intermittent songs to maintain the spirit, a good mix of role-playing and discussion, etc.
- drawing out the participation of everyone at the meeting
- putting questions to the villagers (to deepen the analysis, to clarify information, etc.)
- suggesting ways in which the scenario might be developed and encouraging the villagers to make similar suggestions
- facilitating the selection of volunteers from the audience to take on roles in the drama
- sending new actors, briefed to raise certain issues, into an on-going drama
- stopping the drama at certain points and asking the villagers to comment on it or to suggest what should happen next (and then getting them to take roles in the continuing dramatization)
- suggesting moments where small group discussion might help to deepen the analysis or participation
- summarizing suggestions and asking for consensus.

Day 9 (Wednesday)

In the morning we held a long team meeting. (Team meetings were organized each morning and usually involved a round of evaluation comments on the previous day's work followed by strategizing on the plan for the day.) We started out by summarizing the issues on newsprint:

WATER

private boreholes not accessible during drought

school borehole only accessible to those who can pay the water fees

SCHOOL FEES

secondary school not easily accessible to the poor

RESETTLEMENT

Concerns about:

the infrastructure to be provided (equipment, oxen, housing, schools)

the splitting of families (no access to father's equipment, etc.)

putting people together from different areas

lack of possibilities for women

traditional matters — rituals, graves, etc.

WOMEN'S CONCERNS

husbands away in town, lack of financial support, beatings

illegitimate children

no independent economic base (the men control income from crops)

We felt that the resettlement sketch could be used to bring out peasant questions and concerns, answer some of the misunderstandings, and clarify some of the genuine constraints on peasant participation. We decided to play down the school fees problem and make it simply an introduction to the resettlement issue. Elineth persuaded us to add a play on adult literacy which, she explained, could help in mobilizing participation in the national literacy campaign. (Some of us felt that there was little concern in the village about literacy. Elineth explained that even though the men had no interest, the women were very keen. The women, she said, feel that literacy helps them break out of their disadvantaged position in the community.)

We agreed to work towards a story-line linking the different issues, with one poor peasant family experiencing each of the problems — water shortage, not enough land, no money to pay school fees, migration to the town to work or to the resettlement area, the burden on women, etc. However, we never really achieved this. Each of the problem-dramas remained discrete sketches, in keeping with the episodic nature of the pungwe. It seemed the right approach, given the continuously changing scenario of each problem-drama and the fact that our actors, especially the men, kept changing. (Each day a new group of men would arrive, with only Guhwa, Hunda, and a schoolteacher attending throughout.)

This day, at Hunda's urging, we agreed to go to a new village (Bunhu). At first we resisted the idea, feeling we would lose the momentum in Muchinjike. But Hunda had a different understanding of the workshop. He wanted to work in a number of villages so the experience would benefit the whole ward. This alternative view forced us to reexamine the direction of the work and showed that we had not adequately consulted Hunda on the workshop process.

We agreed with the idea of extending the work to the whole ward as a long-term possibility, but argued that in the limited time available we should concentrate on one village and one group of villagers and consolidate the work before moving on to a new village. We suggested that Hunda might take the work to other villages in the follow-up period after the workshop. We agreed to go to Bunhu, since plans had already been made for our visit, but we arranged for the Muchinjike villagers to accompany us, as a way of maintaining continuity.

Hunda told us that Bunhu was only three miles away. Three miles turned out to be closer to thirty miles, which we covered by bus, and one and a half hours by foot. But the effort was worth it — five hundred people were waiting for us.

When we got there we quickly realized that what was planned was a full-blown pungwe and our idea of continuing the improvisation-analysis work had to be abandoned. What people expected was a performance rather than the concentrated process of analysis we had been developing in Muchinjike. We met and quickly cobbled together some sketches and songs — as our contribution to the pungwe.

The performing area was a huge open space in front of a newly-built bottle store and grocery store. The bottle-store owner not only did a roaring business during the event, but also received praise in the opening song for his new shop. (Before then, villagers had to walk five miles to another village to get supplies.) After some songs, dances, and a welcome by the local party chairman, we put on the newly-developed literacy play and the water sketch. Guhwa showed an inspired talent for handling the large crowd — he moved the action to the different sides of the audience, engaged the audience in dialogue, and on two occasions roped in audience members to join the play when he felt new characters were needed.

Bunhu has a severe water problem, so at the end of the water sketch we organized a discussion. We divided the large crowd into small groups, each led by a team member or one of the Muchinjike villagers. In spite of the attractions of the nearby bar and the alternative of continuing with the pungwe, people took the discussion seriously and talked about the water problem for almost an hour. The Bunhu wells have dried up and the women have to walk long distances and wait in long queues for water. The community had started to dig a new borehole but they ran into rock. All they need is help in blasting through the rock. The local party chairman agreed to take the matter up with the District Council.

After the discussion the pungwe resumed and continued for another two hours. We contributed some more songs and joined in the hosts' songs and dances. Their performances included a ritual rain dance, a dramatization of a marriage (with a funny scene about bride price negotiations), a folk play on village cooperation, and a spectacular Jerusarema group. "Traditional" themes in the folk plays and ritual dances alternated with contemporary issues and modern performance forms (e.g. Jerusarema), disproving the stereotype that African culture is static and preoccupied with the past. The spirit was very high and we kept going song after song until we had to leave to meet the bus.

It was once again a privileged opportunity to be part of a vital community celebration, a community celebrating its history and its traditions and talking about its experiences, problems and aspirations through song, dance, ritual, and role-playing. It demonstrated not only the tremendous performing skills in the villages but also the highly developed organizing skills (which, if directed into, say, the organization of rural development, would make a major impact).

In the circumstances we felt a bit handcuffed. It was an abrupt change from our work process in Muchinjike where we had been working on a constantly-evolving dramatization, with situations, roles and even the actors continually changing. Here we were expected to "perform" and we just weren't prepared. However, the experience forced us to reconsider the performance/process dichotomy: in this situation a drama which had already been developed to a certain point (i.e. not just a short, problem-posing scene) might have given the audience something more to talk about and add to or reshape. We talked about preparing something along these lines using lots of mime (given the language limitations of team members), but we never got around to it — the work with the villagers took all our time and energy.

That evening at the workshop centre Janet, Ghonche, Martha and Kalengay ran a mime workshop for all of the participants. This was one of three evening workshops (the other two were dance-drama and puppetry) aimed at giving participants a basic introduction to theatre skills.

Day 10 (Thursday)

In the morning we had a good team discussion on animation methods, prompted by Guhwa's spontaneous attempts to involve the audience on the previous day. We listed the following ways of developing audience participation:

- getting one of the characters who is experiencing the problem to walk up to the audience at the end of the sketch and ask them what should be done (as a lead-in to discussion)
- stopping the drama and asking an actor in role to describe his/her position (as a lead-in to discussion)
- stopping the drama at a certain point and asking the audience how it should be continued (and getting audience members to take roles in the continuing dramatization)

- as a variation of the above, a character can turn to the audience at a point of decision and ask for advice, and then use this advice in the continuing improvisation
- using a narrator as an on-stage animateur who can develop discussion with the audience within the structure of the play
- involving the audience in the play through scenes requiring large numbers — e.g. village court, community meeting, wedding celebration
- sending in from the sidelines new issues by sending in new actors (briefed to raise those issues)

We returned to Muchinjike full of plans for taking the work a stage further. But it was a low day — several team members were sick, some interpersonal tensions flared, and relatively few villagers pitched up (about 10 men and 25 women). We wasted a lot of time waiting for people to come, keeping our own spirits up by playing theatre games but not doing enough to interact with and motivate the people who had already gathered. A few joined us for the theatre games, but we couldn't succeed in reactivating the high-spirited, highly-focused atmosphere of the first five days.

The one game that did work was a naming game introduced by Ghonche. It showed in a small way that we had moved well beyond the superficial, relatively anonymous contacts of the Botswana theatre-for-development work and had actually begun to know the core group of villagers who gathered each day. There was a special dynamic going on as each person spoke his name and later spoke the names of each of the other participants. This was no longer a crowd of strangers — this was a group of friends.

Kalengay made some headway on the water issue, with some spirited animation. He wanted to "put the 'theatre' back into 'theatre for development'," using drama's special capacity for reflecting the future. He felt there was no sense of urgency about the water problem and wanted to give it that sense of urgency by showing what might happen in the future. (His analysis was confirmed in the final evaluation when Guhwa said, "No one will do anything about the water until it becomes a crisis.")

He orchestrated a new water sketch in which a poor family's child becomes mortally sick. He then stood up and challenged the audience: "Look at the situation. The mother can get no water here (pointing to the school). She can get no water there (the private borehole). I just don't understand?!" ...and divided people into two discussion groups.

When the discussion started we discovered that the men in the audience were all new. All of them were poor and identified with the problem in the drama:

> *This is just what's happening. People with water are saving the water for their own families. Old people are getting nothing. How will they survive?*
>
> *People who don't give water are oppressors...but if we fight for water, we're going to be arrested.*

We asked them what could be done. At first they remained apathetic:

> *We can do nothing. The problem can only be handled by government.*

Kalengay threw the challenge back to them:

> *But we are men. Can't we dig a well?*

They said,

> *No. The ground is too hard. And a well won't solve the problem. It's too shallow. What we need is a borehole.*

So we asked,

> *What can be done to let people get water from the school borehole?*
>
> *Nothing - the school committee insists that people pay the water fee.*
>
> *But if people are too poor to afford it?*
>
> *It makes no difference. They won't let people who haven't paid get the water.*
>
> *[Kalengay] But a child is dying. We need water now.*
>
> *Go to the school. You might get a cupful. But you won't get it on a permanent basis.*
>
> *But what can be done?*
>
> *We can do nothing. Only government can sort it out.*
>
> *But government is the people - the committee is the people!*

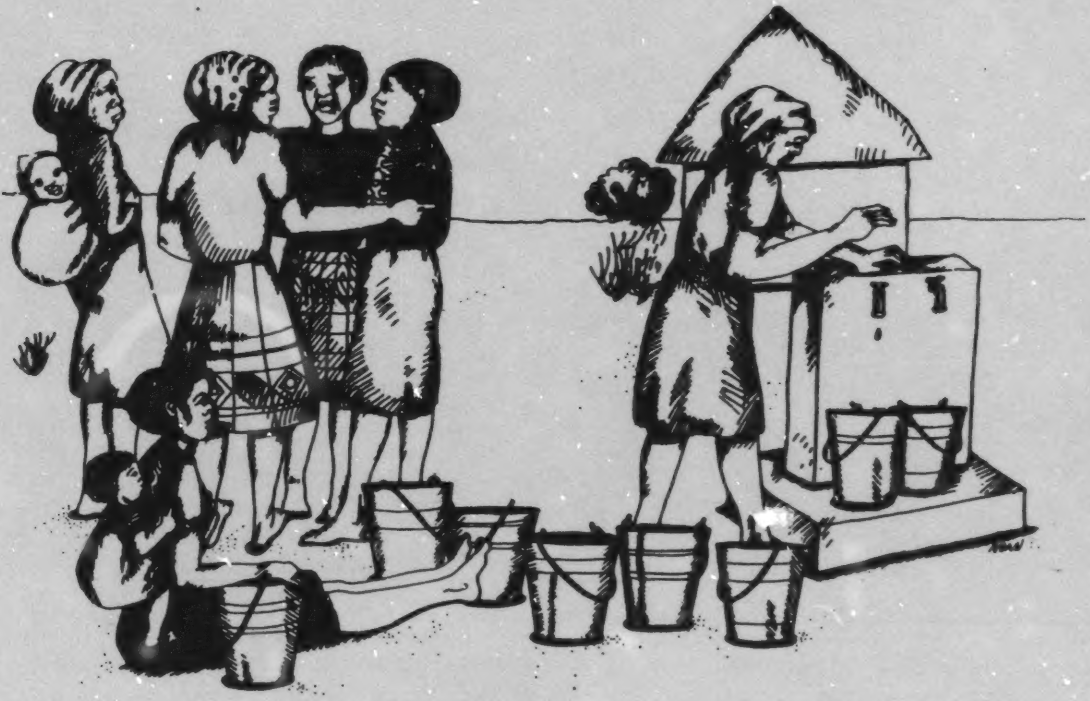
This rhetorical challenge produced no response. We seemed to be making no headway. So we switched back to dramatization — to see if that would make the search for a solution more concrete. Kalengay asked the men,

> *How would you take up the issue of people suffering because they can't use the school borehole?*
>
> *We'd go to see the headmaster.*
>
> *Okay, let's show it.*

The man who had done a lot of the talking got up, grabbed some of the other men to go with him, and walked up to a teacher who had just arrived at the meeting. The teacher (playing the role of the headmaster) gave them little satisfaction — he simply quoted back to them the school committee's policy. So the men called a public meeting and voted the committee chairman out of office. We intervened:

> *Is this realistic? And anyway, will it solve your problem?*

They agreed it was unlikely; they felt they had little influence. We suggested they organize a public meeting with the school committee to review the policy. So they gave it a try. In the new improvisation the economics of borehole maintenance came out. Families were expected to pay $2.60 for a 3-month period. If larger numbers paid for the diesel, the water payment could be lower. They also questioned the Headmaster about the money from the sale of the tomatoes.



The women, who had been meeting separately, came up with a totally different drama. They talked about it in the spirit of cooperation which had won the war. They said,

> *Why should anyone suffer? We must work out a way of sharing the little bit of water there is in the village, rather than everyone fighting for herself.*

By the end of the afternoon the water issue was still unresolved, but we felt we had pushed as far as we could go. In the end it was the villagers' problem. They had to find their own answers and develop their own commitment to do something.

Day 11 (Friday)

In the morning we had a good self-critical evaluation, reviewing Thursday's work. One member started to blame the villagers for the poor turnout, but the rest of the group criticized this attitude:

> *It's no use scapegoating the villagers. We've got to be better organized ourselves. All of us have to be committed and active and focused. We should be ready to work, even if only two or three people pitch up. And anyway you can't expect people to come to meetings every day for two weeks in a row.*
>
> *Our own commitment, our own morale, gets conveyed to the villagers. If we're ready to go and genuinely interested in working with them, they'll respond.*
>
> *Once we've agreed on the overall objectives and working method, everyone should be looking for ways to take the work forward, to deepen the analysis, to broaden the participation.*
>
> *We need to keep the spirit, the momentum going. There should be no long breaks. At the end of each drama, team members should be ready to move quickly into the audience to start the discussion.*
>
> *While we need to be able to respond to the situation, to leave room for spontaneity, we also need to have an idea of what we're going to do, two or three items in advance. While we're singing one song, we should be planning the next two songs or looking for ways of moving from the song into some more improvisation (for example, through mime actions introduced into the song).*

Kalengay then raised the problem of solving the water issue when only a few men attend the meetings: "We need to get all of the villagers together to work out a solution." We agreed, but felt that this problem should be thrown back to the villagers themselves — how can they overcome the apathy, how can they mobilize a full community meeting on the water issue? As a technical suggestion someone said that if we found some drums and started each meeting with drumming and dancing, this would be as effective a means of mobilizing the people as word of mouth.

The resource persons proposed a new strategy for the day:

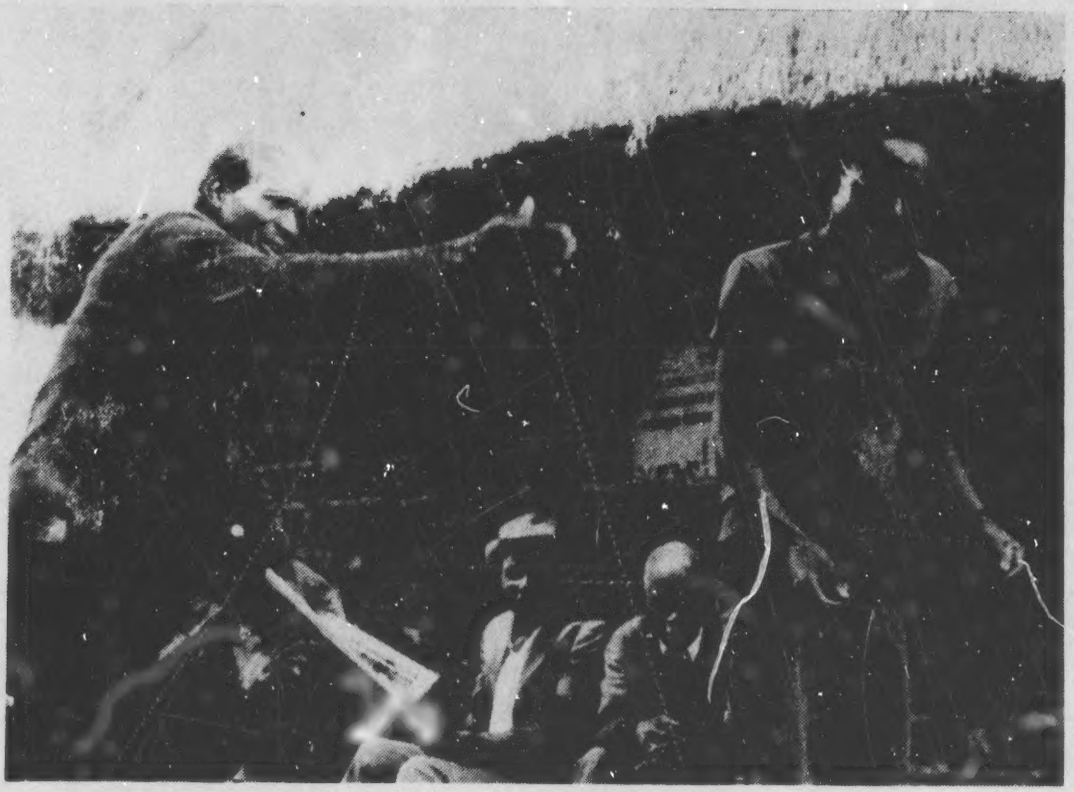
> *Now that everyone understands the basic process, we should share the leadership - everyone should get a chance to animate the work.*

We discussed how to do this and agreed that different team members would animate different issues and dramas. We agreed that the focus for the day should be to deepen the analysis while improving the structure and performance.

This new strategy and the newly revitalized energy and commitment gave us our best day. It started with an exuberant bout of singing at the new venue — the homestead of one of the more active women. Each team member led a song; Kalengay and Ghonche introduced some dance and mime actions; and on the final song Ghonche got the men and women paired off in a dance, finishing off with the two groups playfully rejecting each other — the women remaining in one end of the homestead and the men retreating to the other end — a fun lead-in to two separate rehearsals.

In the men's rehearsal we took up the resettlement issue which had been put aside for two days. We started with a father (Hunda) trying to persuade his son to go to the resettlement area. In the improvisation the father attempted to shame his son into going:

> *We fought the war for land so we could farm. Now that we've won the war you want to run off to town!*



But the reaction from the audience — fifteen middle-aged and older men — indicated that it was the older generation, not the youth, who needed to be persuaded:

> *According to custom people should stay together and marry people from the same area.*
>
> *If you go the resettlement area, you won't be able to stay with friends.*
>
> *If some go to the resettlement area, those staying behind will get their land.*

So we changed the drama, making the father the central character, the person who had to be persuaded. We introduced two families — in one the father (Guhwa) accepts the son's move to the resettlement area; in the other, the father (Hunda) rejects the idea and forces his son to work for him in his fields. We added to the complexity by arranging for Hunda's daughter to fall in love with Guhwa's son — so Hunda also has to decide whether to let his daughter go to the resettlement area (to marry Guhwa's son). Through a number of improvisations and discussions, we were able to build into the scenario some of the concerns people have about resettlement (e.g. concerns about the infrastructure provided) balanced against the benefits, which finally convince Hunda to let his son go.

After an hour and a half's rehearsal, the two groups came back together, to share what they had done. The women had worked on three sketches:

- a literacy drama based on the misrepresentation of a husband's letter to his illiterate wife by a malicious neighbour
- a sketch about a husband selling the crops (grown by the wife) and squandering the money on girlfriends and beer
- a play about an unmarried young woman who becomes pregnant and the subsequent court case in which the baby's father is ordered to pay maintenance — a turnaround from the original drama in which the girl loses the case.

The sketches were much stronger theatrically: there was a good balance of dialogue and action and some excellent miming (e.g. one scene starts with two women yoked together to represent oxen and another two women walking behind controlling the plough). In one of the plays the narrator and the central character turned to the audience on several occasions and engaged them in dialogue. Each drama started and finished with a song and included a number of songs to underline points in the drama or show a passage of time.

All of the discussion and analysis which helped to shape these dramas may suggest that the dramas were boring and lifeless, but this was not the case. The quarrels and fights at the borehole, the husband carousing with the bargirls in town, getting drunk and coming home to beat his wife, the brideprice haggling and the marriage ceremony, the lovers' scenes (especially with a woman playing the man's role), the husband's letter being deliberately misread by the neighbour, and the funny literacy scene of adults being put through the sing-song drilling of "ba-be-bi-bo-bu" — created lots of enjoyment. People identified with each of these situations which increased their interest.

It was the highest point of the workshop. Everyone was involved and contributing — to the scenario-making, performing, singing, discussing, animating, translating, morale-building. Even some young men who had watched from a distance in a previous meeting got drawn in by the spirit of the occasion and took a major role in the music-making. The day finished with a tremendous feeling of unity, everyone together in a big circle singing and dancing.

By this stage we felt we had achieved most of our objectives and the workshop could have ended. But we continued on with the final two days, trying (a) to improve the work theatrically, and (b) to facilitate further community discussion and decision-making on the major issues, especially the water problem.

Day 12 (Monday)

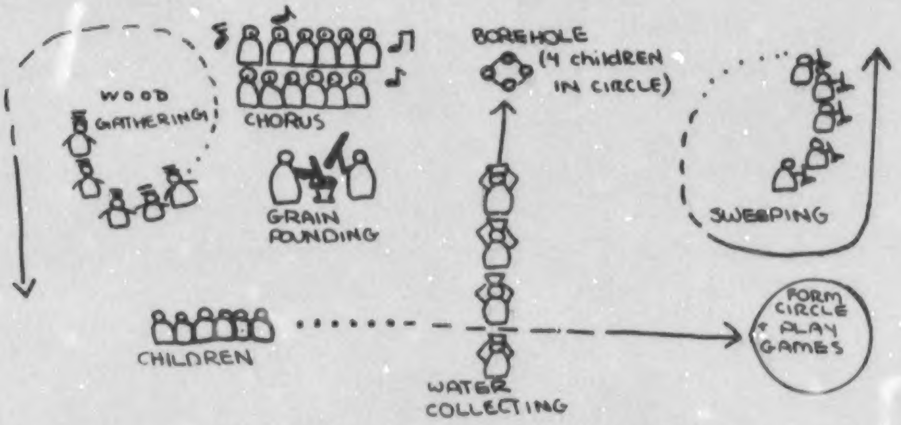
This was our last day in Muchinjike, since we had agreed to go to another village on the following day for a final collaborative performance. So we treated the day as a "dress rehearsal." We started by rehearsing the water sketch. The audience this time mainly consisted of well-owners and fee-payers and they quickly showed their reaction to the water issue:

> *The school borehole is public and the public rules. The public made the rule that only those who contribute can get the water.*

So instead of developing a number of "solutions" scenes showing community meetings on the problem, we decided to limit ourselves to a much simpler drama which would pose the contradictions clearly and leave it to the audience to decide on what was to be done. This involved:

- a fight scene at the private borehole, establishing that the water was no longer accessible to the public
- a fight scene at the school borehole between water payers and non-payers
- a family crisis, the wife having returned from the two boreholes without water — drought — poor harvest — starvation — no money to pay the water fees, finishing with the wife and husband confronting the audience: "What are we going to do?"

Then, while Ghonche rehearsed the resettlement scene with the men, Kalengay and Janet worked with the women and children to improvise an opening scene for the performance. It was an exciting piece of choreography: the women were organized into groups, each miming a different activity (collecting firewood, carrying water, sweeping, etc.) and moving in a certain pattern, all to the beat of a popular song.



In the resettlement drama Ghonche made the following changes:

- a mime on agricultural work in the resettlement area was added, to break up the dialogue
- Guhwa's son was given a number of dialogues with the audience, trying to persuade them of the benefits of resettlement (facilitating more audience participation)
- the wedding song was changed to a better-known wedding song, so that the whole audience and not just the performers could join the celebration.

By then about eighty people had gathered, so we started the dress rehearsal, going through the following sequence:

1. Introductory mime on women's activities.
2. Fight at private borehole (initial posing of water problem).
3. Resettlement drama.
4. Drama on the husband squandering the money.
5. Drama on teenage pregnancy.
6. Water drama (more detailed presentation of water problem).

We developed some discussion and audience participation within the dramas on resettlement, family conflict, and teenage pregnancy, and stopped for a fuller discussion at the end of the water drama.

In the discussion on water, the villagers made the following resolutions:

> *The elderly should not be expected to pay. Young people and women should do some jobs to earn the money. People who have money for beer should be able to pay.*
>
> *We should organize together, collect a contribution from each family, and dig a new borehole.*

At the end of the afternoon, a group of mbira players (traditional guitar music and singing) pitched up to entertain us and a new group of older women appeared and performed a folk play. This was a timely reminder that the activity was as much theirs as ours and that cultural expression had a validity in its own right, as well as being a vehicle for popular education. The women's group seemed very shy and lacking in confidence, and performed their play on the edge of the meeting circle in a quiet and restrained way. Nevertheless, they learned from their experience and from watching the other plays, and a day later, when they performed it again, it was totally transformed. The dialogues were much louder and shorter, the women more self-confident, and the play full of fun and action — including the most lively scene of the afternoon, a mimed hunt complete with spears.

Day 13 (Tuesday)

In the morning we picked up forty villagers from Muchinjike and sang and danced on the bus all the way to the new village (Madamombe). Eight hundred people pitched up for the day-long pungwe of songs, plays, dances, and Jerusarema performances. We put on all of our sketches, plus the new sketch which the older women contributed. Our resettlement play dragged on too long because of the new actors roped in at the last minute, but the women's sketches recaptured the crowd's interest and restored the team's morale. The pungwe continued on, play after play, song after song, for five hours, with no flagging of interest on the part of the crowd, showing once again that "theatre was already in the villages," that people already had the interest, enthusiasm, and basic skills. All that was needed was encouragement, stimulation, and support.

Day 14 (Wednesday)

We returned to Muchinjike in the morning for an evaluation session. About forty women and ten men pitched up. We organized the meeting as a full plenary discussion which, unfortunately, allowed the men to do most of the talking — so the following comments are not an adequate reflection of the women's impressions, criticisms, and suggestions. In response to our first question about the impact of the workshop, people said,

> *This is what we've been crying for. You've helped us become united.*
>
> *In our life time we've never seen such a thing. We've been missing our own culture. We now see that we can revive it.*
>
> *The dramas and songs opened our eyes. They showed us what is good, what is bad. They also brought out other problems and showed us how we can solve our problems.*
>
> *You've helped to sharpen our "axes" (skills) and gave us a new confidence in our cultural achievements.*

We then asked for their criticisms of the work. They said:

> *We should have formed a group for each separate cultural activity (singing, drama, instrumental music).*
>
> *Some of the community's own plays were over-run by the ideas of the outside group. You should have given the community a chance to develop some of the plays on its own.*
>
> *Schoolchildren should have taken a more active part.*

Then we asked them about the problems we had discussed during the work. Had any of the discussions been useful?

> *I'm poor and have no land. If there's help to plough the land at the resettlement area, I'll be the first to go there.*
>
> *Transport is a major problem. People who have lorries are charging too much between the resettlement area and here.*
>
> *We need to have a general meeting to discuss the water problem. We can put it across just the way it was expressed in the drama. We can't let people die just because they don't have money. Everyone should be asked to contribute 10¢. Then when the diesel is finished, people can be asked to contribute again.*
>
> *I'm a village health worker and I'm troubled with the water problem. Every village needs a public borehole. Government should help sink a borehole with community support.*
>
> *We've dug many wells collectively - but it's hard to dig down deeper. We run into stone.* [a woman]
>
> *The problem about water is not the men's - it is the women's - they need to hunt for water every day.* [Hunda]
>
> *It was a problem for my wife to get water - so I dug a borehole. Most of you expect Mugabe to sink a borehole, even though the water problem is worse in other areas... Water is not yet a crisis. The community will only do something when it becomes a crisis.* [Guhwa]
>
> *We've agreed to call a general meeting but we shouldn't decide too many things beforehand because we're not representative. Otherwise people will say we've imposed something on them.*

Then Hunda intervened and asked, "What are you going to do to continue the theatre work in this way once our friends have gone?" People said they'd like to continue the work — and would set up an organizing group with people who had participated in the workshop.

Then we had a long farewell of songs and dances, hugs and handshakes, exchanges of addresses, a group photograph, and some refreshments (laid on by the villagers). We left the village in high spirits and sang all the way back, right into the dining hall.

Late in the afternoon we held a team evaluation:

> *We established a good working relationship with the villagers - talking to them as equals and treating what they said seriously.*
>
> *The idea of a cultural exchange was a good way of getting the process started. It gave the villagers a chance to show what they could do and helped reinforce their self-confidence.*
>
> *We were able to bring the villagers together, create a spirit of unity, and get them to talk together about common problems.*
>
> *Bringing people together is an achievement in itself. People are very isolated because of the scattered homesteads. Cultural activity draws people together and at the same time revitalizes people's culture.*
>
> *Involving people in acting out problems and finding their own solutions is a better way of doing development than imposing solutions from outside.*
>
> *The discussion was real, not token. People were focused because they were discussing their own problems.*
>
> *Women's participation was excellent but men's participation was disappointing. In the future much more attention needs to be given to mobilizing the men.*
>
> *The objectives of the workshop should have been clarified to the villagers each day. More time should have been set aside at the beginning to explain the objectives and discuss villagers' expectations.*
>
> *The workshop did not overcome people's attitudes of passivity and dependence on government. Individualism has become entrenched through colonialism and it will take a while for self-reliance and collectivism to re-emerge.*
>
> *The poor depend on those in power yet there has been a breakdown in communication between them. "Theatre for Development" will help to reestablish this communication.*
>
> *The work might have been more effective if we had worked with the women's group, youth group, the poor, and other groups separately. People would have much more in common and the work would go more quickly.*

We then worked on a team report to be given on the following day to the other participants. We decided to dramatize it — using a narrator to tell the chronological story in outline and the rest of the group to mime the actions being described. The audience (our fellow participants) became the villagers and were drawn into various activities being portrayed. The dramatized report ended with a song being hummed by the group and Hunda, out front, summarizing the villagers' impressions of the work.

III.

ANALYSIS

1. Introduction

This diary is being completed in Canada — a long way from Muchinjike. Since the final evaluation was very brief (we only managed to produce a quick list of team members' evaluation comments), I'd like to add my own more detailed assessment of the process, building on some of the points made by team members and the villagers. I've organized this in a dialectical way, showing the strengths and limitations of the work and some of the possibilities generated out of the constraints.

On the following two pages is a model of the process and some of the major factors involved. While this model is a bit mechanical, it shows the complexity involved in this kind of training exercise and provides a frame for the analysis.

THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT MODEL

1. AIMS

- to train development cadres and theatre artists in theatre-for-development (TFD)
- to start a TFD programme in the Murewa area,
  a) as a practical focus for the training
  b) as a popular education/culture program in its own right

2. CONSTRAINTS

- duration of workshop too short — only possible to start the process
- "outside-in" TFD approach: limits possibilities for follow-up

3. CONTEXT — ZIMBABWE

- radicalization of rural areas and emergence of pungwe as medium for popular education/culture (during liberation war)
- government commitment to dialogue, consultation, conscientization, and mobilization

4. SKILLS, RESOURCES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE ANIMATEURS AND THE VILLAGERS

OUTSIDE TEAM (ANIMATEURS)	VILLAGE PARTICIPANTS
Skills and Resources	
• leadership/animation	• indigenous leadership/organization
• theatre-for-development methodology	• indigenous processes of education/mobilization
• structural analysis	• local information/experience/problems/concerns/aspirations
• technical information (e.g. resettlement policy)	• performance skills and indigenous performance forms
• performance skills	• interest/enthusiasm/commitment
Limitations	
• consciousness (e.g. developmentalist myths)	• consciousness (e.g. moralizing dramas)
• experience (first time doing this; actors not animateurs)	• organization
• unity as a team (first time working together; no common ideology; other differences — language, etc.)	• morale
• "outsiders" — over half the team were newcomers to Zimbabwe	

5. ORGANIZATION/PARTICIPATION

- links/liaison with development cadres and party cadres
- ad hoc community gathering and/or organized group and/or whole community
- participation of certain sectors: a) women, b) men, c) youth, d) rich/poor peasants, e) development cadres/party cadres/traditional leaders, f) indigenous cultural groups
- discontinuous participation — i.e. people attending a single session or occasional sessions
- differences in participation — e.g. men dominating the discussion
- link between drama/discussion and organization/action

6. OVERALL STRATEGY OF THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT

- Objectives: a) mobilization, b) consultation, c) community problem-solving, d) conscientization, e) reinforcement of popular culture
- continuous interaction with the villagers in a collaborative study and dramatization of problems identified by the villagers
- starting point: a) villagers' own performances and performance forms, skills, structures; b) villagers' experience, problems, aspirations, analysis
- drama-making as a) a mirror/focus for discussion/analysis; b) a tool for concretizing the analysis, raising contradictions, trying out solutions

7. DETAILED OUTLINE OF THEATRE-FOR-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Activity	Purpose
cultural activity: exchange of songs & dances	to develop contact/collaboration/communication between animateurs and villagers
discussion/interviewing/observation/chatting/role-plays by villagers/listing & analysis of data	to encourage villagers to talk about their experience, concerns, problems, aspirations; to collect, systematize and analyse data; to agree on problems for detailed analysis
dramatization-analysis process; large & small group discussion; audience participation & discussion built into drama	to facilitate (a) problem study — raising and analysing contradictions; showing interconnection between issues; analysing root causes; (b) problem-solving — trying out different solutions, analyzing contraints on suggested solutions or further contradictions
performance and discussion	to extend discussion/analysis to a wider audience as a step towards decision-making and mobilization

8. OUTCOMES

OUTSIDE TEAM (ANIMATEURS)	VILLAGE PARTICIPANTS
• skills in theatre-for-development	• increased skills in performance (scenario-making, performance technique) and revitalization of the pungwe
• deeper critical awareness	• deeper critical awareness and self-confidence
• dialogue with peasants: increased communication with/learning from peasants	• dialogue with party and development cadres: greater understanding of government programs
• mobilization: motivating villagers to participate in national campaigns	• increased motivation to participate in national campaigns
	• heightened community unity
	• community dialogue: exchange of views, raising of issues rarely addressed in community meetings, problem-solving

2. Objectives, Constraints, and Positive Factors

The objectives of the workshop were twofold:

- to train development cadres and theatre artists in theatre-for-development (TFD), and
- to start a TFD program in the Murewa area, (a) as a practical focus for the training, and (b) as a popular education/culture program in its own right.

The major constraint was time — in the twelve-day period we could only get the two processes started. Follow-up is needed to reinforce the skills learned and to support the ongoing work in Murewa District.

The other major constraint was the "outside-in" TFD model used in this workshop. The process was built around the initiative of an external team "parachuting" into the community for a short period to work with the villagers. This experience did introduce development cadres and villagers to the use of drama-making as part of an initial phase — bringing people together, getting them to express themselves, to analyze problems and discuss various options for solution. However, it was too short to include within its scope the actual solving of the problems (i.e. mobilization of the villagers and collective action) and showing how drama-making might support this phase (i.e. facilitating the process of deciding on a solution and a way of implementing it, mobilizing people for action, and sorting out constraints in the course of action). Further work is needed

- to show the development cadres how to use TFD on a day-to-day, ongoing basis in their own communities
- to assist development workers and villagers in the Murewa area to continue this activity on their own, now that the external input has been withdrawn
- to experiment with ways of moving beyond this "parachuting-in" approach.

Part of our success in this work was due to the particular political situation and historical experience of Zimbabwe and the receptiveness to this kind of work. The war's radicalization of the rural areas and the experience of people's theatre during the liberation struggle made fertile ground for the workshop. The Zimbabwe government's commitment to dialogue, consultation, conscientization, and mobilization provided a clear mandate and focus for the workshop.

Another factor which strengthened the process was the villagers' own contribution. Their input was far more than the subject matter for the drama-making. They also brought an enthusiasm and commitment, initiative and organizational capacity, and their own experience, skills, and way of structuring people's theatre as the basis for community celebration and learning. They were already accustomed to improvisation and the creation of their own sketches. This converted our task into one of showing how improvisation and drama-making could be linked with discussion and used to intensify their own learning process.

3. Team Work, Relationship with Villagers, Planning and Animation

In our team we succeeded in overcoming our own wide differences (class, gender, ideology, occupation, nationality, language, etc.) to create a good spirit of cooperation and unity. We were able to achieve a reasonably democratic spirit, although sometimes resource persons dominated too much or participants deferred too much to their leadership (preferring to be led and taught rather than contributing to the strategizing and planning). Members worked hard, showed a real sense of commitment, accepted a healthy spirit of self-criticism, and adapted themselves to a range of different and sometimes trying situations.

Part of the tension in this kind of work is the insecurity of a process which is defined and becomes clearer as the work evolves. There is little predictability and some team members found it difficult to think on their feet and adapt to the continually changing process; others responded to the challenge with great resourcefulness and initiative. Part of the challenge was to learn new skills while simultaneously being expected to apply them in the firing line of a real program. The theatre artists in the group had few opportunities to show off their artistic skills, except through the daily exchange of songs and dances and the occasional mime used to spark off villagers' creativity. (In the latter stages, however, they had more opportunity to make use of their theatre knowledge.) They found it difficult but struggled patiently to learn the new role — of animating, of encouraging others to show what they could do.

At the same time, the mix of development workers and theatre workers was highly productive. The former kept the focus on the educational and development objectives and process: the latter, however, lightened the mood, showed the importance of the non-cognitive, the emotional, the morale-building side of development, and often came up with inventive ways of using theatre to move the analysis forward.

On the deficit side, the team suffered from the irregular attendance of Zimbabwean team members. One dropped out, another disappeared for four days, and another two missed three days each. This meant there were only three regular

Zimbabwean team members to help as interpreters, keep us informed on Zimbabwean development policy, and help us develop a methodology suited to the Zimbabwean context.

We compensated for this somewhat by drawing on the skills, knowledge, and translation abilities of the villagers. We integrated a number of villagers into our team, including Mr. and Mrs. Guhwa, some of the women, and a local schoolteacher; we relied a great deal on Hunda for analysis of the issues, for technical knowledge (e.g. of resettlement policy), and for an understanding of popular feelings (as a party worker); and we overcame the translation problem by recruiting a number of educated villagers as "whispering interpreters." Nonetheless, our work could have benefited from the advice and mobilization support of an experienced, locally-based development cadre.

Our strategy of "community entry" worked well. The exchange of songs helped to build a relationship and established the spirit for the whole workshop. The initial role-plays by the villagers served as a precedent-setting way of getting information on and perspectives about the community. On the negative side, our information-gathering seemed a bit too much of an interrogation rather than a discussion. We could all use more practice in "chatting," learning things without pens poised and a battery of questions.

We developed a close working relationship and cameraderie with the villagers, heightened by our mutual joy in creating culture together. The villagers clearly enjoyed the work, saw that it was useful, and participated actively. They recognized that they had a lot to contribute and that their input — information, analysis, and performing skills — was crucial to the process. This helped to reinforce their self-confidence and to establish a genuine dialogue.

Nevertheless, it would be exaggerating to say we really got to know the community. The relationship worked well for the limited purpose of the workshop, but only long-term interaction would have produced the trust and deep relationship needed to get an understanding of the complexities and inter-relationships in the community. At the end of the two weeks we had only a superficial understanding and were left with lots of questions about things such as

- the factions and various interests operating in the village
- the extent of cooperation or tension among the local branch of the party, the development cadres, and the traditional leader, and its effect on community organization
- the problems of mobilizing men and youth
- the extent of women's participation in village decision-making
- the links with structures outside the village.

On the other hand, we tried to avoid becoming identified with any particular faction or interest group — a common problem when one becomes too intimate with members of a community. While it was difficult to avoid partisanship (e.g. our real sympathies lay with the women, who seemed the most exploited sector of the community), we did attempt to work with the whole community — men and women, rich and poor, elders and youth, development cadres and party workers — in a process aimed at benefiting the whole community. We tried to get away from making quick assessments that certain individuals or groups were "bad socialists" and unlike us were "not working in the interests of the people." While we did not mask the class and gender conflicts and the real contending forces in the village, we did attempt to build some unity and work with all sectors of the community. (Our one major failure was the youth, who participated in only two sessions of the workshop.)

At the same time, we tried to counter the weakness in community-wide approaches of ruling interests dominating the process and manipulating the benefits. We did this by

- encouraging the women and other less privileged sectors to express themselves in the public meetings and making it possible for them to discuss the issues among themselves (in small groups)
- encouraging the discussion of issues (e.g. resettlement, water) which would primarily benefit the women and the poorer villagers.

The strategy of continuous interaction with the villagers in a collaborative process produced tremendous results. The villagers experienced a much more sustained, participatory and deep-rooted learning process than if they had watched and discussed a ready-made play produced by outsiders. The process avoided top-down didacticism and built on the existing knowledge and accumulated experience of the peasants. The plays reflected their reality, their perspectives and their drama-making, rather than outsiders' views and dramatization of their world. Their involvement in making and remaking the drama threw up new insights which would not have surfaced otherwise, and produced a much more critical analysis of the problems and possibilities for change. Their participation in the creative aspect of this work also helped to revitalize their own village cultural activity and to boost their confidence. Finally, the sustained participation provided a good basis for the long-term continuity of the work.

On the debit side, we got locked into such a heavy schedule with the villagers that we didn't leave ourselves enough time to review the process at each stage and strategize on the village work. Often we found ourselves racing off to the village in the morning before we had made a systematic evaluation of the previous day's work or developed a unified view on what we were going to do, including sorting out different expectations and analyzing optional strategies. This resulted in, for example, contradictory actions such as some of us trying to establish a continuous working relationship with the Muchinjike villagers while another team member was making arrangements to visit other villages. In addition, we didn't have enough time to teach some of the basic skills (e.g. animating the dramatization-analysis process), so participants only got a chance to learn these skills through seeing them demonstrated in the field or through trial and error.

While villagers took an active part in the discussions and in the performing, their participation could not be described as control — the more authentic sense of participation. The outside team had most of the control — we shaped the process, leading it and suggesting through our questions the direction it should go, choosing the priorities and deciding which issues should be raised each day. The villagers were left out of the overall planning and day-to-day evaluation. We didn't spend enough time explaining what we were trying to do and getting their input on the process so that they could participate on a more equal footing. We did the planning and the animation and they, literally, danced to our tune. Calling our work "animation" or "facilitation" simply masked the issue of control. In fact we played a dominant and interventionist role. "Anipulation" (animation + manipulation) or "facipulation" (facilitation + manipulation) might have better conveyed the dual-edged potential of this work.

Part of the problem was our preoccupation with the issues and with deepening our own understanding. This made us at times too interventionist, trying to find out new things and imposing our own thinking rather than drawing out the villagers' own analysis. This criticism came out in the final evaluation:

> *Some of the community's own plays were over-run by the ideas of the outside group. You should have given the community a chance to develop some of the plays on its own.*

One of the dangers is that the work begins to serve the interests of the process rather than the villagers. The villagers have their sense of ownership over the dramatic material and the process, instead of building up their confidence and the feeling that it is their analysis and their scenario, makes them feel mere performers of someone else's drama.

While on one hand we should avoid an over-romanticized view of the people — i.e. that they have all of the answers — at the same time we should be careful that we don't overwhelm them with our analysis, as a villager put it, over-running their plays with our own ideas. Participation in shaping and controlling the learning process is a key factor in conscientization, the basis for the development of identity and self-confidence (which is important as the cognitive aspect of conscientization). Once we accept the idea of building on people's traditions and popular knowledge and building up their self-confidence, we need to maintain a careful balance between (a) pushing the thinking forward, and (b) building popular control over the process, the feeling that they are shaping the plays and making them reflect their thinking and creativity. While it is true the outsiders have a contribution to make in the way of structuring an effective learning process and applying a theoretical understanding of Zimbabwean social structure, we need to be careful that we allow the villagers to share the initiative so that they assume responsibility for this work beyond the limited scope of the workshop.

This work cannot be rushed. A highly participatory process takes time and often, in our passion to make "progress" we cut corners by making quick decisions without full discussion within the team or with the villagers themselves. This "progress," of course, is illusory if the people do not feel part of it. It is only when the villagers fully identify with the process and claim responsibility for its development that they will be interested in continuing it.

A few additional meetings with the regular village participants, to get their suggestions on the process, would have helped. This would have made our work more organically related to the villagers' own processes of thinking, drama-making, problem-solving, and mobilization, harmonizing the rhythm of the workshop with the rhythm of village life.

4. Organization

Without villagers' input to the planning we were unable to develop a satisfactory organizational strategy. While we originally planned to work with an organized group, we ended up working with an ad hoc community gathering (without a serious discussion of the options, either within the team or with the villagers). The ad hoc group made some headway in the discussion of the issues, articulated a broad range of perspectives, and created some unity and a starting point for community decision-making and action.

However, it did not represent a cohesive and continuing group which could take organized action. At the same time, its fluctuating membership, especially among the men, meant that the debate kept changing each day. One day it was dominated by well-owners and more affluent men, the next by poorer villagers. This made it difficult to work towards either consensus on action or a deeper understanding of the issues (e.g. in discussing the water problem, the borehole owners resisted fresh analysis of the problem, simply restating the water payment policy of the education committee). It also meant we had to brief new men each day for the acting roles. Another problem was that even though the women outnumbered the men ten to one, the agenda and debate tended to be dominated by the men.

One alternative might have been to work solely with the women's group on the first five days and then open it up to other members of the community, using the women's discussion and drama-making as the starting point for the wider debate. The women were already organized and had the potential of taking action on issues. Their participation throughout the workshop was consistent, progressive, and enthusiastic. If we had worked with them the process would have been (a) a stimulus for their own organizing efforts, and (b) a structured input to community discussion.

We did lend support to the women's position, providing a forum for their ideas which had never been discussed openly in public as a village matter. However, we never managed to go beyond that point. The group of women had strong potential for mobilizing other women, if not the whole village. Their consciousness was high — they had already identified the issues of women having a say in the use of their husbands' wages and women's control over the income from the crops they produced as points of action. They voiced their criticisms of some of the "domesticating" ideologies implicit in traditional culture. (If we had worked more with them we would have focused on some of these issues.) Some of them were freedom-fighters or chimbwidos during the war and all had played important roles in supporting the struggle — a source of their critical views, outspokenness, and independent spirit. Their participation in the production co-ops reinforced their self-confidence — not only through the independent source of income, but also through the opportunity to meet regularly with other women and talk about problems. Nevertheless, their position was still weak and they had to struggle to retain what was gained during the liberation war. If we had worked with them directly we would have given them some encouragement and helped to reinforce their position.

At the same time, their ideas on issues such as wife-beating or control over one's labour would have been a good starting point for community-wide discussion. The confrontation of ideas would have raised the consciousness of, and clarified the contradictions for all participants.

The other organizational problem of men's participation is more intractable. While the cultural gatherings attracted much larger numbers of men than would normally attend village meetings, their participation (in comparison with the women's) was low and inconsistent. A number of explanations are possible:

- the large number of men working outside the community
- a possible feeling that the program had little relevance to their needs
- a possible feeling that this program (like the literacy classes) was a "woman's activity."

However, we never got a chance to find this out in a systematic way.

5. Old Bottles, New Content

The adoption of the pungwe structure and the villagers' theatre forms was a major breakthrough. (It complemented the strategy of working with the villagers throughout the process.) Much theatre-for-development work in Africa has undervalued indigenous performance forms and the indigenous organization of cultural activity. Through working with the villagers' own patterns of cultural activity, rather than imposing an alien structure, we were not only reinforcing villagers' confidence but also building on and extending something which was already being organized and controlled by the people, thus ensuring continuity. By breaking down the separation between theatre-for-development and village traditional performances, making them one activity, we affirmed the value of the pungwe as an activity in its own right and as a catalyst for development.

At the same time, we were adopting more than a "traditional form" or performance medium — we were working with and adapting the people's own self-organized process of education. They already had a well-tried framework for community learning. All we were doing was showing how, through a few modifications, the pungwe structure could be intensified as a means both of community education and of decision-making. We were showing that people's cultural activity could be not simply an expression of their identity as a community but also an active force in the development of the community.

While recognizing that the pungwe is the logical base for this work, one must at the same time avoid the populist trap of presenting this cultural activity as a true reflection of popular interests. As with other forms of cultural expression, it reflects the dependency relations of the society in which it functions. As the Latin Americans have shown, people's culture is a mixture of both popular values (i.e. advancing the interests of the popular classes) and internalized ruling class ideology (for example, in the Zimbabwean case, the substratum of ideas inherited from the colonial era). The task of popular education is to enable the peasants and workers to make a critical analysis of their ideas and assumptions (represented in the pungwe performances) and to identify those truly popular elements in their culture.

"Instrumentalization" of the pungwe for development purposes, however, remains a complex issue. While the pungwe emerged in response to functional needs during the liberation war, it has sustained itself because of popular control and popular content. It fulfills a range of needs including entertainment, celebration, the expression of solidarity, grassroots communication, escape, fantasy, and poetry. Attempting to reshape the villagers' sketches and to work within the pungwe structure, therefore, needs to be handled with sensitivity. On one hand there is an important conscientization task involved in preparing people for socialist reconstruction. On the other hand one must be careful not to "kill the goose that lays the golden eggs." In harnessing the pungwe for development purposes one must be careful not to dislodge the other purposes or functions of the pungwe, and also to keep the pungwe in the hands or control of the people. Only in this way will the pungwe remain a vital part of village identity.

6. The Functions of Theatre-for-Development

We started with a single-minded and narrow focus on theatre as conscientization and community problem-solving. However, as the process developed we adopted a more eclectic and broad-based approach of using the plays and the play-making as

- mobilization in support of national reconstruction — giving people information and motivating people so they could participate effectively in national campaigns (e.g. literacy, resettlement)
- consultation or two-way communication — developing a dialogue between government cadres, party officials, and the peasants, an opportunity for each to express his/her views, to learn the others' perceptions and priorities, to get feedback on government policies, and for peasants to have a say in development programs
- community discussion and decision-making — discussing community problems and talking about solutions and the implementation of solutions as the starting point for self-reliant community action
- conscientization or consciousness-raising — questioning some of the contradictions inherited from the colonial regime (e.g. the privatization of water) and some of the new problems (e.g. implementation constraints on resettlement)
- revitalization of villagers' performance culture and their sense of community — providing a stimulus and some new skills for villagers' own self-reliant cultural activity and a focus for the strengthening of community identity.

These categories, of course, are not mutually exclusive and often overlap. Some of the "plays" took on a number of these functions at different stages of the process. For example, the discussion and dramatization on resettlement (a) started with an analysis of the roots of the land problem (conscientization); (b) then drew out peasant impressions of the resettlement program and answered questions and clarified misconceptions (conscientization and consultation); (c) then took on an exhortatory function of encouraging the landless peasants to join the resettlement scheme (mobilization) at the same time as clearing up other misconceptions (consultation).

The mobilization plays (e.g. the literacy play) were the most straightforward. They attempted to motivate people to participate in national development programs by showing why the programs were important (e.g. the literacy play showed that literacy would help rural women read letters from and write letters to their husbands working in towns). These dramas were the most familiar to team members.

Consultation or two-way communication was most evident in the resettlement issue. The dramatization and discussions brought peasants, party officials (e.g. Hunda), and development cadres together to share their ideas on this issue. Party officials had a chance to explain the resettlement program and to get feedback. Peasants had an opportunity to express their hopes, questions, concerns, and ideas from their own perspective and get answers to their questions. The drama-making as a tool of discussion brought out many more of their concerns and questions than would have come out in a normal discussion. Through this two-way dialogue many of the peasants' misunderstandings and reservations about the resettlement program were cleared up. In a number of cases they had good suggestions to offer on the implementation of the program (e.g. resettling people from the same area in order to build more cohesive co-ops) and pointed out some of the real constraints (e.g. the exploitative price of transport to the resettlement area, the problems of draught power, etc.). In a sense the consultation or two-way communication was a continuation of the kind of dialogue established between the freedom-fighters and peasants during the liberation war. Or, as one team member put it,

> *The poor depend on those in power yet there has been a breakdown in communication between them. "Theatre for Development" will help to re-establish this communication.*

The peasant-official consultations on resettlement showed that the dichotomy between information-giving (which in the Freirian universe has always been denounced as over-didactic) and consciousness-raising is an unnecessary polarization in the Zimbabwean context. The resettlement program is a major strategy for transforming the colonial structures and it is important that peasants have solid information on and answers to their questions about resettlement, at the same time that their critical awareness of all the issues involved is increased.

Consultation or two-way communication also implies making it possible to raise and discuss sensitive issues which might otherwise never be dealt with. The workshop sessions provided an opportunity for people to express their grievances, criticize the status quo, or give conflicting opinions. For example, the women used this forum to talk about their mistreatment by their husbands. (They even proposed concrete ways of changing things — e.g. going to town at month-end to collect money from their husbands, accompanying their husbands to the Grain Marketing Board, etc.). The poor peasants used the opportunity to criticize what they felt was an inequitable water distribution policy, the rich to defend the policy.

The water play was the focus of community decision-making. Water kept bubbling up as a major problem, particularly from the women who had the burden of hunting for it each day. To begin with we resisted the idea of portraying an easy solution to the problem — e.g. a triumphal scene of community work on the construction of a borehole. We didn't want to, as Chris Brookes ["Seize the Day: The Mummers' Gros Mourn," Canadian Theatre Review (1983), 37:38-50] once put it,

> puncture their balloon with a stage catharsis, allowing the audience to feel that it no longer needed to achieve catharsis in the real struggle outside the theatre's doors.

We wanted no sponge theatre, draining people's energy and commitment. We wanted a theatre which challenged them to do something, and we wanted the doing to be something within their own capacity. It seemed apparent from what the villagers told us that a borehole deep enough to serve the community needs required a technology beyond the means of the villagers. It could not be done by self-help labour. They needed external support, something which they had less control over and something whose organization and lobbying required a larger effort than what we could realistically aim at in the short time-frame of the workshop. So we focused on what was within their control — the distribution of water already available in the village.

Once we concentrated on what was possible within the existing (inequitable) structure, we ran into problems. Borehole owners and water users didn't want to change the system. The poorer villagers felt powerless to do anything. The consensus which was eventually produced (for more equitable distribution of water in the village) seemed too unrepresentative to generate any meaningful action. What was needed (and where the drama work showed its limitations) was an organizing effort to bring the whole community together to resolve the issue and do something. Instead, our drama work tended to outflank the necessary organizational work and at a certain point we could go no further. People needed to stop acting out the solution on the stage and take real action.

In the end we were left with some of Guhwa's pessimism — that the community will only act when water becomes a crisis. We tried to show the potential crisis (using drama's capacity to reflect the future) but, until the crisis becomes real for large numbers of people, concerted action may not be forthcoming. As Hunda put it, the issue still remained that of village unity (a unity which had been undermined through colonial policies and structures). The problem they were left with was how to mobilize the whole village around this issue.

Nevertheless, according to their own testimony, the work with the villagers did build up some unity and community identity. And while community self-help on its own cannot solve the major structural problems of rural Zimbabwe — the lack of land, for example — it can contribute to short-term changes to improve peasants' lives and build up peasants' confidence, analytical ability and organizational strength to have a greater say in the larger structures and policies which determine their existence.

The water and resettlement issues were both the focus for conscientization. For example, in the case of water, we used a process of questioning and dramatization to analyze the issue, raise contradictions, explore root causes, and examine alternatives:

> *Why do women at the well fight? Because some have a right to the water and some don't. Why is there a difference? Because the water is privately owned. Why is this the case? Because private ownership of water was encouraged by the colonial regime.*
>
> *What about public boreholes? There is a borehole at the school but some cannot use it. Why? They don't pay the water user fee. But why? They are poor.*
>
> *Why are they poor? The drought, poor harvests, victimization during the war (e.g. the killing of their cattle by Smith's troops), lack of education and job opportunities, etc. What can they do about it?....*

Through this type of analysis the problem of water became understood not only in terms of factors outside people's control (e.g. drought) but also in terms of the man-made dimension, the socio-economic and political roots of the problem. The peasants began to see their village historically and as part of a larger political-economic structure.

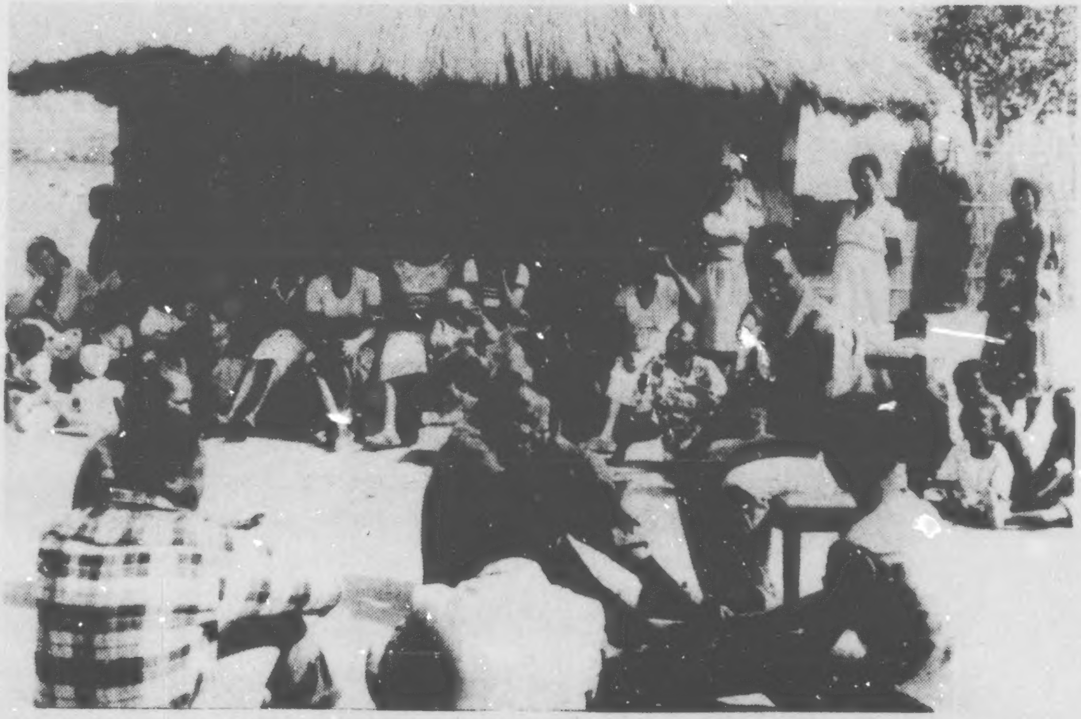
In spite of concern that the peasants might resist this kind of analysis as too sensitive, they actually started the process, talking about their struggle for land which had been grabbed by the white settlers as the major way of explaining the need for resettlement. They were totally receptive to a process which tried to show their problems in a long-term historical perspective. As one workshop participant put it, "this seemed a natural process given their long-term desire to rehabilitate their country."

They also pointed out class and gender contradictions, although these were resisted somewhat by the richer peasants and by the men, respectively. There was no way we could fall back into the top-down, over-didactic, and over-simplistic approaches of conventional extension work. The villagers would have had none of it. They were too aware, too politicized, to accept spoon-feeding and non-problematizing approaches. We weren't imposing class or gender analyses before villagers were ready for it. They already had a high level of political consciousness and were already thinking along similar lines (although it may not have been articulated in the same terms). They had been mobilized and politicized during the war and this prepared them to see their situation in historical terms and as part of a system or structure.

The Zimbabwean development cadres on our team also argued that conscientization was a legitimate part of their work. One of them said,

> *Problems are an integral part of development and they need to be faced squarely. It is through dialogue and consciousness-raising that you encourage self-reliance. There is only so much that government can do on its own. People need to be mobilized and conscientization is an important part of the mobilization process.*

It was courageous for Zimbabwe to allow this kind of consciousness-raising so soon after Independence. Given the monumental task of rebuilding a war-torn country, the idea of a contradiction-raising process was a sensitive one. In this situation we decided to go ahead and deal with the contradictions raised by the villagers (including class and gender conflicts) but at the same time to strengthen village unity and community spirit — and this was confirmed by villagers in the final evaluation: "You've helped us. We've become united."



On the whole we achieved a satisfactory balance between drama-making and analysis. A common problem in this work is that one or the other dominates. If the former, the analysis loses out and you get a play with superficial thinking, a simplistic understanding of the issues, even though attractively packaged. If the analysis dominates, you lose out on the unique potential of the drama to raise contradictions, concretize the analysis, try out different solutions, etc.

The two aspects were kept in balance right up until the final day (which was solely a performance). The analysis and people's understanding kept being extended and deepened throughout the process. There was no resistance to discussion or analysis — people saw this aspect as a natural part of the work. The problems were real and people wanted to talk about them.

Nevertheless there was a continuing need to look for ways of blending the drama-making and analysis more naturally. A number of options emerged (although there was insufficient time to practice each of these alternatives):

- working with the whole audience on the cyclical, stop-start, dramatization-analysis process (the Nigerian approach)
- breaking the audience into small groups to do the same process — which increases participation and combines dramatization and analysis in a more organic way (i.e. there are few or no spectators; group members improvise something and then discuss it themselves)
- building "audience involvement" into the structure of performance — e.g. at points of decision performers ask for suggestions from the audience.

All of these options represented less mechanical ways of linking the discussion and dramatization than the conventional performance and post-performance discussion. In all three, drama becomes not only the mirror for a discussion but also the means of continuing the discussion, of raising contradictions, and exploring alternatives.

As the workshop progressed the inevitable pressure to "finish off" the drama, to find an easy answer or simple prescription to solve the villagers' problems, developed. We managed to resist this in the case of the water problem. We felt there was no easy solution and all we could do was to pose the problem and the reason why it wasn't being solved, as clearly as possible. Coming up with a "let's all cooperate" drama would have masked the real constraints preventing community action. Many of the problems are intractible and not susceptible to the easy message or prescription of conventional extension work.

On the other issues we were much less successful. As pressure built up for a final performance, team members fell back on moralizing or victim-blaming dramas which failed to show the structural roots of the problems or the constraints preventing people from solving them. For example, the "teenage pregnancy" drama continued to point the finger at the men without showing some of the other factors involved such as structural unemployment or the migrant labour system and their effects on family life. The "husband's neglect" drama didn't progress further than showing women's lack of control over the income from their crops. We should have taken this further, looking at possibilities for change — i.e. through direct action on this issue (e.g. women taking the crops directly to the marketing board themselves) or through women forming their own co-ops.

Part of the problem was that we were too ambitious: we tackled too many issues (water, resettlement, literacy, teenage pregnancy, husband's control over the income from women's crops). We might have been more successful if we had focused on one or two problems which would have forced us into a more in-depth analysis. Part of the "reformative" tendency also came from the inevitable push towards a performance as the workshop progressed. Somehow the contradictions exposed earlier in the workshop became papered over as we scrambled to produce a final product, becoming overly preoccupied with the technical aspect of theatre production.

The other factor was the consciousness of the team members. We all had different ideological perspectives and different levels of consciousness, given our different working environments and experiences, and this limited our capacity for pushing the analysis much further. To make the process work as a vehicle of conscientization requires an inquiring, critical, questioning attitude which cannot be instilled in a three-week period. In fact, TFD requires a complex set of skills, including the ability to see a community

- inside-out, i.e. with the sensitivity and good listening to understand the community from the villagers' perspective and to encourage the villagers to express it
- outside-in, seeing the community as part of a larger socio-economic and political structure.

Nevertheless, bringing development cadres and theatre artists to work on a collaborative basis with villagers on a sustained process of analysis and drama-making was an important step in their own conscientization.

7. What Was Gained?

The workshop was successful in starting the two processes —

- the training of development cadres and theatre workers in theatre-for-development (TFD)
- the launching of a TFD program in the Murewa area.

All participants in the process gained a great deal, according to their respective testimonies — good fun, heightened confidence and awareness, new skills, and in the case of the villagers, a revitalization of their culture and community identity.

In the case of the villagers there is a good chance that the work will continue, not with the same level of intensity but through the transfer of skills, awareness, and issues to various community meetings and activities. In the case of the development workers and theatre artists there is a need for more practical experience, each in their own areas, supplemented by training and opportunities to share and compare experiences. Since returning from the workshop I've received letters from eight team members telling about their plans to do this work in their respective countries. Kalengay, for example, is organizing a similar workshop for fishermen in Zaire; Elineth (Zimbabwe) is planning a gathering of literacy groups in her area to pass on the skills she learned; Ghonche in Tanzania has organized a theatre-for-development workshop with peasants in the area surrounding his college.

In addition to the transfer of this experience to a number of African countries who were new to this work, the other gains from the workshop were methodological. The workshop as an experiment succeeded in evolving a TFD process suited to the Zimbabwean context and rooted in the people's performance traditions. It brought out many new strategies and showed that there are many ways of doing theatre-for-development.

The workshop was a start — it primed the pump. It is now up to the Zimbabweans to follow it up with experimental work, training, and extending this work to other parts of the country. The challenge remains with them to build their own dynamic base for people's theatre and use it as a mirror, a catalyst, and a hammer for transforming their world.

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